

ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

CONTENTS

"Prisons" in the USSR	D. N. Pritt, Q.C.
Planning Local Agriculture	M. Krutkin

FOUR SPECIAL ARTICLES ON CULTURAL QUESTIONS

Culture of Soviet Turkmenistan	K. M. Kuliev
Soviet International Cultural Relations	V. G. Yakovlev
Development of Culture in the USSR	G. Alexandrov
The Soviet Fine Arts	D. Shmarinov & A. Kamensky

AND BOOK REVIEWS, ETC.

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The ANGLO - SOVIET JOURNAL

Winter 1954-5. Volume XV, Number 4

Editor : Andrew Rothstein, M.A. *Assistant Editor* : Stella Jackson, B.A.
Editorial Office : 14 Kensington Square, London, W.8. *Tel.* : WEStern 1571.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
" Prisons " in the USSR	D. N. Pritt, Q.C. 2
Developing Culture in the USSR	G. Alexandrov 8
The International Cultural Relations of the Soviet People	V. G. Yakovlev 17
The Culture of Soviet Turkmenistan	K. M. Kuliev 24
The Soviet Fine Arts	D. Shmarinov & A. Kamensky 29
Planning Local Agriculture	M. Krutkin 36
SCR Notes	43
Book Reviews	45
(<i>Anna Karenin</i> ; <i>Diaghilev's Oversight</i> ; <i>Oblomov</i> ; <i>Turgenev, A Life</i> ; and <i>Turgenev v. russkoy kritike.</i>)	
Publications Received	47
SCR Programme	48

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Organ of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

"Prisons" in the USSR

D. N. Pritt

PRACTICALLY every person convicted of a crime in the USSR today, and sentenced to imprisonment, goes to what is officially called a "Corrective Labour Colony" (and no one goes there, or to prison, unless he is so convicted and sentenced). To the old-fashioned closed prison go only incorrigibly difficult convicts, who would make life unbearable for others in a colony.

Those who study problems of imprisonment in Western Europe are familiar with the controversy as to the superiority of "open prisons" over "closed" or cellular prisons; and they are familiar too with the great practical difficulties involved in finding work for prisoners to do which will fit them better to earn their living on release, without creating difficulties by competition in the market with the products of free labour. The Soviet Union has long ago decided—and few will disagree with it—in favour of the open—as I will show, the wide open—institution; and it has, of course, no difficulty whatever in finding work for its convicts in the production of normal saleable goods by normal factory methods; the absence of unemployment and the steadily increasing public demand for consumer goods remove all these problems.

With that background, my eight professional colleagues and myself, who formed a lawyers' delegation to the Soviet Union in September 1954, were very interested to visit two of these colonies, one an ordinary colony for adults and the other a special one for juveniles. (It is not all fun to make a serious study of a country through a lawyer's eye; you see courts, and government departments, and mental hospitals and prisons—as one of our hosts remarked, there is a Russian saying that "one lets only one's very best friend see one's kitchen, and we are showing you our sculleries!" It may be more pleasant to make a serious study of the USSR through the eyes of an actor, a musician, a student of folklore, or even a tourist agent; but we are lawyers, and we did our task as lawyers, and we learnt much of very great value.)

The colony for adults lies on the edge of a village called Kriukovo, some twenty-five miles from Moscow; it covers perhaps fifteen acres, has a barbed-wire perimeter—no walls—and consists of a range of buildings comprising dormitories, canteens, kitchens and factories, with the addition of a library, reading rooms, a small theatre and a small sports ground. There is plenty of ground to spare, and a view of the countryside in most directions. Here there live and work between 700 and 800 male convicts (there used to be women here, too, but the rapid diminution in crime and the effect of the general amnesties of 1951 and 1953 in releasing nearly all women then imprisoned have closed down all women's prisons in the Moscow region) guarded by no more than fifteen guards, i.e. five on duty at any one moment, not even armed during the day but only at night.

The men sleep in dormitories, in rooms holding as few as seven or eight or as many as thirty, in two-tier metal bedsteads, rather close together (better than British army huts, and not as good as British hospitals); the rooms are clean and do not smell; they have light walls and look fairly cheerful, with a few pots of flowers and a table and locker or two. The men eat in the equiva-

lent of a factory canteen, but with tables for four people with blue oilcloth tablecloths; the food is ample, nourishing and tasty, better than that in most factory canteens in Britain. They work two shifts a day in the production of a wide variety of aluminium goods, cast, spun and pressed, with machinery, some of which is old-fashioned and some up to date. The factory has all the arrangements that are usual in the Soviet Union, such as "tables of honour" with photographs of the best workers and banners for the best workshops. Not quite all the prisoners work in the factory; a few are on miscellaneous work, such as roadmaking inside the colony, and a few work on jobs outside. Of these latter, some are not even guarded, but go off to work unaccompanied and return at the proper time. A few free workers, girls from the village, come in to do certain jobs—checking up on the articles manufactured, and so on, side by side with the prisoners.

Pay, which as usual in the USSR is calculated on a piecework basis wherever possible, is twenty per cent less than the normal pay of the free worker for equivalent work. Their hours at the time of our visit were nine a day in place of the normal eight, but were to be reduced to eight on October 1, 1954.

Their leisure—the period when they are off shift, and neither eating nor sleeping—can be spent as they wish. They are encouraged to catch up with their education, if they are behindhand, by attending classes in the colony or by correspondence courses. They are encouraged to acquire technical education by the same methods, so that they may have higher industrial qualifications when they leave. (When some of them wanted to learn tractor-driving a tractor was imported, and the spare ground was just sufficient for them to learn.) They may take part in "circles" for acting, music (orchestral or individual), photography or radio work, chess, draughts and various sports. They may read, drawing books from a library which contains 4,000 books and many newspapers and periodicals and organises discussions among the prisoners on books they have read, the librarian at Kriukovo being a prisoner serving a seven-year sentence for theft. They may go to the colony cinema or watch television.

That, in outline, is their day; but no human being wants days in captivity, however much good it may do him! So let me consider how they can shorten their total days of imprisonment—what is labelled generally remission. Some of them have sentences of as much as ten years; few less than one year. How do they get remission? There is no automatic remission, but there are several more generous methods. To begin with, the factory norms are so reasonably set that, at the time of our visit, no one was failing to reach the norm, and the worker who reaches his norm has his day counted as one and a half days of sentence; the worker who exceeds it by twenty per cent, as so many of them do, has his day counted as three days. So a consistently good worker, working the usual six days and resting on Sunday, will count nineteen days a week, about twenty-seven months a year. Further, a general review of prisoners' conduct and sentences takes place every twelve months, and on such reviews as much as a year may be lopped off. We were thus not surprised to see the men working pretty hard in the workshops. In this way, a prisoner determined to pull himself together and make good may easily find himself free after less than half his sentence, in terms of time he has served. There is, finally, one further method. If the view is taken by the colony authorities that a prisoner has really reformed and should be discharged, but he has still, in spite of every remission, some more time to serve, application may be made to the court which sentenced him to grant a conditional release, without any form of supervision or reporting, subject only to the probability that if he is convicted again during the unexpired period of his sentence he will have to serve that period as well as the further sentence imposed for his subsequent offence.

That is a view of a convict who behaves well. Some of them, of course, do

not. How are they punished ? There is a range of treatment. They will probably begin—unless their misconduct is really serious—with what the English school-boys call a “pi-jaw” from the “council of actives” (this is a council of the most active and intelligent prisoners, elected by general meeting of the whole body of prisoners to deal with all sorts of problems on behalf of the prisoners). If this is not enough, the refractory prisoner may go before a “comradely court”, a long-standing Soviet institution, in which a group of one’s equals argues out with one, without formality, the why and wherefore of one’s misbehaviour, and has power to inflict a small penalty ; such comradely courts are just being established in this colony.

These mild sanctions may not be enough ; and the next stage may be a public reprimand, delivered orally before a general meeting of prisoners, by the council of actives or by the prison authorities, or a similar written reprimand. Does this sound priggish, or a bit “public school” ? Yes, but it does not seem priggish in a country of highly developed social conscience ; and the resemblance of some aspects of this conscience to the better aspects of British public schools was pointed out over twenty years ago by a British citizen visiting the USSR for the first time.

Of course, even the reprimands may not suffice ; and it is possible for the authorities to put a prisoner under arrest, which means imprisonment in a solitary cell—the equivalent of ordinary prison life in most countries—during the hours when not actually working in the factory. This, I was told, happens very rarely indeed. There may also, of course, be curtailment of visits and correspondence ; and loss of remission is almost inevitable, inasmuch as their conduct falls to be considered on the periodical reviews.

Three visits a week are allowed to every prisoner, and unlimited correspondence. A prisoner with a good record of behaviour may be allowed a “personal private visit” ; this means in practice that his wife may visit him for a day or a weekend, and that they are given a room in which they may stay together. We actually saw on our visit one of the prisoner’s wives ; she worked in a school in Tashkent, and a second visit had been allowed in her case rather soon after the first, because she was able to be in Moscow only during her annual holiday.

The money side of the prisoners’ lives is interesting. There is deducted from their factory earnings a sum to cover their food, and they are left with 150 to 200 rubles a month with which they can do what they like ; they can save it against their release, they can send it home, or they can spend it in the colony shop—a well-stocked shop of two departments, one for all kinds of foodstuffs and one for miscellaneous goods. The prisoners spend in a month about 120,000 rubles, and send home about 10,000 rubles. (Many of them are young and may not have dependent families.)

The right to make complaints is important ; they may complain to the director, to whom they have the right of access ; or they may make written complaints to the Home Ministry, the procurator, or any other organisation ; their complaint is sent in sealed, and must be answered in writing within a short (fixed) period.

Finally, of course, the prisoner’s time is up, and he leaves, with a free new suit of clothes and a free railway pass, and whatever money he has to his credit. (The earlier system of compulsory deduction of a percentage from the pay, to build up a “liberation fund”, has been dropped as no longer necessary.) They do not need the elaborate—and too often ineffectual—after-care of some countries, because they have no difficulty in getting work. They are normally more skilled than they were when they were sentenced ; a certificate from their colony of their competence is actually helpful ; and the social organisations—trade unions, the Communist Party and other bodies—are under a duty to help them to rehabilitate themselves if necessary. Should they find any particular difficulty of any kind at home, they can apply for financial help

either to the Home Ministry or to the nearest *corrective labour colony* ! Quite a number of discharged prisoners keep in touch with the colony in which they have served, and report to it how they are getting on. Some of them do, of course, turn to crime again ; but this is very rare. (The colony head cook, a professional cook who had “ fiddled ” the finances of a canteen, was asked if this was his first term of imprisonment ; he answered, “ No, but it is my last ! ”)

One of the remarkable features of the colony is that it is not unusual for a discharged prisoner to make a home in the village outside, and to continue to work in the colony factory, coming in every day to work his shift and then going home ! This is striking enough to anyone ; but to those with knowledge of the black-marketing, the petty rackets, and the innumerable attempts to communicate with friends outside to arrange escapes, which form part of the prison system of most countries, it is almost incredible.

So much for a factual, if brief, account of life in the colony. When one comes to general comment, one feels that the facts almost make their own comment. But it is worth emphasising the wholesome mixture of plain humanity and plain common sense that inspires the system. Nothing is done to degrade or dehumanise the prisoners ; nor is there any sentimental coddling. “ You have offended against the interests of society, a society which does its best to make life fine for you, and even finer. Now, please, put yourselves right with society, and do it by plain hard work. Co-operate with us ; don’t alarm or spite us. Work well and you shall have every encouragement we can give you, not only to get out with better qualifications to make good, but also to get out quickly.”

One could see, as we went around among the men, both at work and at leisure, and talked to some of them, out of range of the “ director ”, that they were on good terms with one another, and with him ; they treated him with respect, but no fear ; he treated them as human beings entitled to proper courtesy ; he did not call them “ comrade ”, for they had lost their civil rights, but he did call them “ citizen ”, and not “ Here, you ”, or “ Here, 17935 ”. And the Home Office official who came with us talked to them in a most friendly fashion, asking after their particular problems or anxieties, and encouraging them in many ways. We really had to remind ourselves that the inmates *were* people who had committed substantial crimes ; they seemed at first sight merely to be people a bit below average intelligence, which the authorities said they were.

What we did have to remind ourselves—and this was not so easy—was : “ This is a corrective labour colony ; this is what the slanderers of the Soviet Union call a concentration camp, where—they tell us—a man may not call his soul his own, nor indeed his body, since—they tell us—most of them die in confinement.”

I have to write, too, about the corrective labour colony for juveniles, which I have already mentioned. I have written, of set purpose, of the adult colony first, so that I could describe the normal general “ penal establishment ” and then turn to the juvenile one, which should naturally be easier and even more hopeful.

It is indeed remarkable. If Kriukovo, which I have just described, is about as hopeful as anything yet devised for trying to cure, in any society, those who have committed serious crimes against that society, that is still a job for the “ scullery ” ; but juvenile crime, which can be vicious enough in some economies, can also be more hopeful ; and here we move from the “ scullery ” to the schoolroom, with the exit door pretty easy to open.

This juvenile colony is at Iksha, nearly forty miles from Moscow, pleasantly situated on a forested hillside, with views all around. As it has to be largely self-supporting, producing its own bread, vegetables and meat (and is some way from any village) it constitutes in effect a large village by itself, more than

half of which consists of free citizens working directly or indirectly for the colony.

The colony itself holds 380 juveniles who have been sentenced by courts for crimes, generally theft or "hooliganism"—a phrase which means no more than violence, and does not necessarily imply any element of ganging together. They must be between fifteen and eighteen at the time of entry, and cannot stay after reaching twenty-one (generally they will be released, one way or another, before then, but if not they must transfer to an adult colony like Kriukovo). They are sentenced by ordinary courts ; at present there are no special juvenile courts, but the courts when dealing with juveniles draw their two assessors from among school teachers, instead of from the regular panel. Sentences on juveniles are, of course, much lighter, and pretty nearly every juvenile was released in the general amnesties of 1951 and 1953.

At Iksha—and, indeed, at Kriukovo too—we were told that most of the crimes still committed by youths or youngish people are attributed to the effects of the war, in the sense that the absence of fathers at the front and the pre-occupation of many mothers with war work left youngsters to run wild and get into bad habits. Of the 380 juveniles now at Iksha, some sixty per cent had lost their fathers, and quite a number had lost their mothers too.

One can describe much of the life by stating the contrasts to the adult colony. The bedrooms are more spacious, the beds single and not in tiers. The work, instead of being factory work with a little education, is primarily educational with some factory work. The education is run by the Ministry of Education, on exactly the same lines as schools outside. Those who, outside, would be receiving education whole time receive it here. Those who, outside, would have four hours a day of schooling and four hours a day of industrial training have that system here too, and are thus very well equipped to go to skilled work when they leave. They are supplied with two sets of clothing, one for school and work and one for leisure ; and now that school uniforms have been introduced throughout the Soviet Union they are encouraged to wear that uniform also. (There are so many varieties of uniforms in the Soviet Union today that we can say, statistically, that if one sees someone in uniform the odds are about fifteen to one against his being a member of the armed forces.)

Much attention, naturally, is given to leisure activities. They have better sports grounds than the adults, a gymnasium, a swimming pool ; they have a really good club house and a large theatre ; they have a number of dramatic, choral, orchestral and other musical circles, as well as film, radio, engineering and other technical groups. They mix freely in their spare time with both the adult members and the children of the large free population, and shop in the same large shop.

Remission is, naturally, more in the picture ; every case is reviewed by the courts every six months, and as much as a year may be cut off at each review. In the five months preceding our visit sixty boys had thus been released and forty more had been given reductions, and the last amnesty in 1953 released every juvenile in the place.

Punishments are similar to those in the adult colonies ; but the maximum stay in a "punishment room" is five days. Offenders may also be put to the more dreary jobs that require to be done around the colony.

Visits and correspondence, including parcels, are wholly unrestricted. They, too, have their own elected "boys' council" for organising colony activities and for disciplining recalcitrant members.

They are paid for the factory work they do, when their education gets as far as doing this work, at the full outside rates ; there are deductions for their keep, and they have free disposal of the balance.

Their rights to make complaints are the same as those of adults, with the same safeguards.

Very few of them escape, although escape is particularly easy ; most of those who escape return of their own accord, on the advice of their relatives.

They naturally need more help than adults when they are discharged, for they are mostly scarcely established in life. The administrator of the colony has to see that they get both work to do and somewhere to live ; and a fund is available to buy them clothes and linen and to give them some money to start with ; and if it takes them a while to get well on their feet there is power to give them a further grant. Few of them commit further crimes ; and one of the most remarkable possessions of the colony is a huge " old boys' book ", with many letters and photographs from inmates who have made good—often in very important posts—after leaving.

Truly, as life improves in the Soviet Union, there is less reason to commit crimes, and fewer crimes are committed. But every crime creates a problem, and every criminal calls for treatment. The Home Ministry does not claim that the treatment is perfect ; it says merely that it is the best that it can do so far ; and I agree with that statement.

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DEVELOPING CULTURE IN THE USSR

G. Alexandrov

Minister of Culture of the USSR



IN the post-war years the Soviet people have achieved outstanding results in all branches of the national economy. In a socialist society the growth of material production is the only reliable and objective basis for the growth of the people's well-being. Building communism is done by the unceasing and harmonious development of all sides of the life of society, without exception, from material production to the spiritual aspects of life farthest removed from the means of production.

Communism brings the maximum material and spiritual good for the working man. The building of communism is unthinkable without an enormous rise in the cultural level of the people, an all-round satisfaction of the cultural needs and requirements of the nation as a whole. This is why culture flourishes in the USSR and in the people's democracies, why the masses of the people in the socialist countries are playing an active part in the development of true culture, education and science.

Culture in the widest sense embraces all sides of the life of society, both the material wealth accumulated by the people and the development of their whole spiritual life.

Material social production and the means of production lie at the root of the whole spiritual side of culture. The spiritual aspect of culture in turn contains within itself the experience of the people, the habits of work and the knowledge that they have accumulated. For this reason the spiritual aspect itself exerts a considerable influence on the development of social production. When we speak of the content of our spiritual culture we mean the wealth of experience acquired by the working people in the course of socialist production, the communist upbringing of Soviet people, the education received by Soviet man in schools, technical colleges, institutes and universities, as well as at a great variety of courses; we mean the books he reads, the increase in regular reading of newspapers and journals and in listening-in; we mean the services art in all its branches renders to the people, the establishment of community morality and of the rules that govern a socialist community. Culture is directly connected with everything that strengthens man's power over nature and makes him a fully conscious, educated and active fighter for the triumph of communism.

The spiritual features of the great Soviet people have fundamentally changed. Not only have we produced our own intellectuals from among the people, but the cultural level of the whole people has risen immeasurably. The active participation of the working people in political life, the growth of education, the mass teaching of adults in schools for general education and at a great variety of classes for improving qualifications, and the making available to the people of every possible form and aspect of culture—books, newspapers, radio, theatres, museums, art galleries, palaces of culture, clubs. All this has vastly extended Soviet man's mental vision.

The fact that over 57,000,000 people are studying in a variety of ways is proof of the great attention paid to the cultural growth of the general public.

There are over 380,000 libraries in the USSR, carrying over 1,000,000,000 books; there are 123,000 clubs, nearly 60,000 cinema installations, and 20,000,000 radio receivers. The output of these last is increasing year by year.

Many new palaces of culture and clubs have been built ; there are metal-workers' clubs in six towns, miners' clubs in four, builders' clubs in three, railway workers' clubs in six, engineers' clubs in four, and there are three new clubs for oil workers.

But Soviet people, who are used to looking reality straight in the face, must see not only the outstanding achievements of socialist culture, but also the grave defects, shortcomings and time-lags which are impeding progress.

Shortcomings in the work of various cultural organisations and in the development of various aspects of culture do not and cannot arise from the content in itself, from the nature and social role of the socialist means of production and culture. Such shortcomings are conditioned by the fact that Soviet culture is still very young, barely one-third of a century old ; they are bound up with the difficulties inherent in the stormy and ever-quickenening development of our culture, with the fact that the working people's social living conditions have created an unparalleled demand for the satisfaction of the Soviet people's cultural needs. In both town and country our cultural and educational work is still lagging far behind the people's needs and is failing to meet their demands. Finally, these shortcomings are bound up with the existence of various relics of capitalism in the people's minds. To dispel these, complex and intensive cultural and educational work must be done for a good while to come. The aim of the Soviet Government and the Communist Party is to make all the workers and peasants in the USSR highly cultured people with an up-to-date education. Nor must it be forgotten that defects in cultural and educational work reflect immediately and directly on the development of industry, transport and agriculture and prevent the fuller satisfaction of the public's material needs.

Book Publication

BOOKS, showing and drawing conclusions from the people's knowledge, experience and life, are a vital element in spiritual culture. In the last few years the publication of books in every branch of knowledge—the social and natural sciences, fiction, technical works, popular science books, a variety of journals—has considerably increased. In 1953 almost 1,000,000,000 copies of books and pamphlets were printed and published in the USSR. Yet there is still a shortage. This is a typical index of the rise in the Soviet people's cultural level. In the publication plan, we must take as our starting-point not the premise that more books are published in the USSR than in any other country, but the premise that the Soviet people's cultural demands are far in advance of the development of book-publishing, which is not by any means meeting the public's cultural requirements.

The Soviet Government has taken steps to extend the printing industry considerably by building new printing works in Yaroslavl, Saratov, Tashkent, Chelyabinsk, Minsk, Rostov and elsewhere, and by redesigning and extending existing printing works in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Sverdlovsk. It would, however, be no exaggeration to say that paper shortage is holding up the further development of book publication. An increase in paper production will make it possible to double output in the next few years, increase sales and develop the library network by substantially enlarging the book funds of existing libraries.

Cinema

AN enormous part in the cultural growth of the whole nation is played by the cinema. This is a sphere of culture where quality and tempo of development are judged by the public as a whole, both successes and shortcomings being keenly felt.

The art of the Soviet cinema has a close bond with the people, for the everyday life and activities of the working people as it portrays them offer boundless source-material for creative development.

Documentary films have recently made a stride forward ; several films have been produced depicting the labour of workers and peasants truthfully and lovingly. Such are *Caspian Oilmen* ; *Volga-Don* ; *Building the Kuibyshev Power Station* ; *Kuban State Farm* ; *The Oka Floodlands* ; *On the Lenin Collective Farm* ; film sketches about metal-workers and engineers, and so on.

As regards full-length feature films on the life and work of the Soviet working class, however, matters are wholly unsatisfactory. One can virtually name only two films on the subject in the last few years—*Donbas Miners* (1951) and *Pattern for Life* (1952). The time-lag in this branch of the cinema indicates the gap that exists in the work of our directors, script-writers and novelists. We have all too few important works of fiction on the working class and working intellectuals of the USSR.

Among the films planned by the Ministry of Culture for 1954-55 there are to be several on the life and work of Soviet workers. Such are *The Great Family* (based on Kochetov's *The Zhurbins**), which is about shipbuilding workers ; a comedy entitled *Stars* which ridicules complacency, the end-of-the-month rush to fulfil the plan, and the unbusinesslike lack of organisation at a pithead ; *Donbas* (based on Gorbатов's novel of the same title*) ; *Broad Stream* (based on Andreyev's novel of the same title), which is on the younger generation of workers ; and a film on oil workers. Many films are to be on the everyday life of workers at machine and tractor stations, on State farms and on collective farms. Nearing completion are *Combine-Workers* ; *Over the Cheremosh*, which is on the beginning of the development of collective-farm organisation in the Ukraine ; *Saltanat*, which is about Kirghiz cattle breeders ; *Warrior Girl*, a musical comedy about young Kazakh farmers ; *Achievement*, on Georgian sheep-breeders ; *Encounter*, on Azerbaidzhan cotton farms ; *Notes of an Agronomist*, a story of village life ; *Collective-Farm Producer*, about the blossoming of the talents of the people. The Ministry of Culture, with the Union of Soviet Writers, is also preparing several scripts on collective-farm life, shooting from which is to begin shortly.

Every worker, collective farmer and office worker should be able to see a new feature film once or twice a week at least. This means raising the 1956 output to between seventy and eighty films. To achieve this, the building of a large new Moscow studio is already under way and the studios in Leningrad and Alma-Ata are being enlarged. New studios are being built in Riga, Tashkent and Baku, the building of a new studio is shortly to begin in Minsk, and several other Republic capitals are to have studios built.

A mere increase in quantity is not the point, however. It is our duty to make interesting and truthful films of genuine social content and high artistic level.

Theatre

SIMILAR duties face our theatres. The Soviet people take our dramatists and our theatres to task, and justifiably so. Both verbally and in writing, audiences express the sense of dissatisfaction they feel on seeing some of our plays. They ask why there are still so few interesting and moving plays on topical themes, why there are so few fine plays about our workers and our youth and our full-blooded and epic Soviet life. They demand work of genuine meaning and high quality, which reflects our life truthfully.

The number of theatres in the USSR increases year by year. They are an important part of Soviet art and culture. This necessitates a decisive improvement in the administration of theatrical affairs by the Ministry of Culture and

* Available in English translation in the SCR Library.

an enhanced sense of responsibility on the part of the theatres themselves. These tasks cannot be performed without criticism from the public. True, in the last few years many theatres have attempted to draw their audiences into discussing the plays staged and have held special conferences to review a season's work. This practice is not general, however, and the practical results are small. Often enough the theatres merely register the audience's opinion without really listening to it. Soviet theatrical workers and dramatists can and must be aided by critical articles from factory and office workers and collective farmers, by public discussions on plays and productions, by audience conferences to review a season or a tour, by meetings of art councils. These tasks cannot be performed without criticism from the public.

In 1953, Soviet theatre companies playing in thirty-nine Soviet languages gave 194,160 performances to audiences totalling 62,262,000 people. Of these performances 57,138 were given in clubs, palaces of culture and rural and district cultural centres. The scale of this work, however, still fails to measure up to the tasks facing us, especially as regards theatre service for country people and workers living in remote areas away from the big cities. To assist this work, the Ministry of Culture sent companies (from the largest theatres in Moscow and Leningrad and more than a hundred Region, Territory and Republic theatres) to other industrial cities and to the areas where virgin soils are being planted in Kazakhstan, the Altai Territory, the Novosibirsk Region, the Omsk Region and elsewhere.

All this is but a beginning, however. We plan to double the number of plays staged at machine and tractor stations, on State farms and in agricultural areas. For this purpose special touring companies are to be created in a hundred existing theatres, the material status of mobile and collective-farm theatres is to be improved, and ten new theatres and eighty new concert parties are to be set up specifically for industrial and office workers at the machine and tractor stations and for State and collective farmers.

Our cinema and our theatre are still, unfortunately, sadly lacking in works really reflecting the people's life and work. Some dramatists and script-writers have recently been turning away from vital themes, losing their awareness of the present and permitting themselves crude errors in the portrayal of our reality. Such authors have been producing plays which are artistically bad as well as poor in content, for example Zorin's *The Guests*, Mariengof's *The Crown Prince*, Virta's *The Death of Pompeyev* and Surov's *Respectable People*.

Music

THERE are in the USSR many talented composers working in many genres. Musical creation is extensive in all the Republics. Operas written in the last few years, such as Shaporin's *The Decembrists* and Dankevich's *Bogdan Khmel'nitsky*, as well as ballets by Gliere, Prokofiev and others, have been having successful runs in the theatres. Such works as Myaskovsky's symphonies, Shostakovich's oratorio *Song of the Forests*, Prokofiev's Seventh Symphony, Aratunyan's cantata *The Homeland*, Kabalevsky's violin and piano concertos, and songs by Solovyev-Sedoi, Novikov, Zakharov, Muradeli, Blanter, Dunayevsky and many others, are very popular.

Nevertheless, the creation of choral and solo songs, concert pieces for piano and violin, symphonic music, and especially operatic music, has fallen sadly below standard in the last few years. There are still far too few fine works on moving topical themes. Our composers should be more active. The public is waiting for new work reflecting the whole wealth of our life.

A vital method of musical education is concert work. There are 126 philharmonic societies and concert managements and 180 musical companies (symphony and other orchestras, choirs, song and dance ensembles). In 1953

these played for 79,000,000 people and held 245,000 concerts, mainly in clubs and cultural centres and on collective and State farms. Concerts are being held increasingly in rural areas.

The emergence in the last few years of a great many young violinists, cellists and pianists, who have been well received both in the USSR and abroad, and have won first places at international festivals in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Budapest, Prague and Warsaw, adds lustre to the considerable achievements of Soviet music as a whole. Soviet musicians of the older generation have won world fame. We may well claim that a Soviet school of musical performers has been created and can hold its own in the world.

The glory of our ballet is undimmed. Leading Soviet ballet dancers, in particular those from the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre and the Leningrad Kirov Theatre, have danced in Athens, Berlin, Bombay, Brussels, Delhi, Geneva, London, Ottawa and other great cities, re-creating the fame of their Soviet homeland.

Several ensembles (especially the Moiseyev State Folk Dance Ensemble, the Piatnitsky State Russian Folk Choir, the Soviet Army Song and Dance Ensemble, the Sveshnikov State Choir of Russian Song and the Beryozka Dance Ensemble) have played an important part in establishing the fame of Soviet art. Many ensembles have been formed on similar lines in the people's democracies.

There are still many shortcomings in the work of the concert organisations. Leading figures do not go on tour enough. They are not seen for years at a time in some Republics and Regions (the Far East, Central Asia, Eastern Siberia). The service to people in country areas is poor; too few concerts are held and what is done is low in quality. Hack work is all too common. Such hack work, like the private-property "impresario", is most detrimental to our culture; it must be determinedly fought. The development around each club and palace of culture of groups of people actively interested in music and the arts will make it possible to bring concert work under public control and to improve its quality.

It is the task of the concert organisations to make a sharp increase in quantity and improvement in quality in concerts for workers and collective farmers, and to organise their tours in such a way that leading figures and the best ensembles visit all the Republics, Territories and Regions, so that workers in agriculture as well as those in big cities can see them.

Radio, Television and Lecture Services

OUR radio and television programmes are justly criticised by workers, farmers and intellectuals for their lack of variety and sometimes for poor performances.*

A leading place in the work of cultural bodies belongs of right to lectures and reports. The USSR Ministry of Culture alone held 3,600,000 lectures in 1953. The problem now is not so much that of increasing the number as of raising the level of content and quality. Here much still remains to be done.

Amateur Activities

THE greater our people's material well-being, the more vital their talent. Amateur art is improving in ideas and in performance. In the Russian Federation alone, over two million people took part, for example, in the review of rural amateur activities.

The first All-Union Exhibition of work by industrial and office workers opened recently in the Gorky Central Park of Culture and Leisure, Moscow.

* See SCR Film Section Bulletin, Vol. I, No. 4 (Oct. 1954) for further discussion of television problems.

Over 150,000 amateur painters and craftsmen took part in the preliminary exhibitions in the Republics, Territories and Regions, showing 285,000 examples of their work. Nearly 25,000,000 people visited these preliminary exhibitions.

The scale of amateur activities may be judged from the following example. In the town of Gorky* there are 16,000 people organised in amateur art groups. There are 245 choirs large and small, eighty-five folk instrument orchestras, forty-one brass bands, 180 dramatic circles (including sixty in various factory shops), thirty Russian accordion groups, forty-four solo singing groups, twenty-six literary reading groups, twenty-five painters' groups and four symphony orchestras.

A fundamental change has taken place in the Soviet countryside under Soviet power, in the cultural sense as well as the economic. There are 82,000 State clubs and over 100,000 libraries, club libraries, reading rooms and collective-farm libraries, with nearly 160,000 full-time workers engaged in cultural and educational work. There are 15,000 permanent and 22,000 mobile cinemas. All this is a powerful cultural force at the disposal of the Soviet countryside.

The Ministry of Culture has taken a number of steps to satisfy the increased cultural requirements of collective farmers, workers, engineers and technicians. A great many films, with the appropriate cinema equipment, have been sent to the virgin lands now coming under cultivation, as have also books on political and agricultural matters, novels, journals and newspapers. Steps are being taken to set up broadcasting centres at machine and tractor stations and in the small villages where their workers settle.

Our towns are doing much to help and to take part in the development of cultural work in the countryside.

Even preliminary figures show the gradual but steady improvement in rural cultural services.

In 1953, for example, 22,000,000 country people saw films showing new agrotechnical methods, while in the first four months of 1954, 28,000,000 people in the countryside saw such films. In 1954 rural areas are to receive 7,000 additional 35mm and 16mm cinema installations. Over 1,800 mobile cinemas, with 1,400 mobile power stations, have already been sent to the virgin lands now coming under cultivation. Very large numbers of copies of agricultural and feature films are being printed for screening in rural areas.

The theatres of the capital cities, and the Republic and Region theatres, have very considerably extended their work in country districts. In the past season the Yanka Kupala Byelorussian Drama Theatre played eighty-eight times in district and village cultural centres, thus reaching some 35,000 people. The Ryazan Region Drama Theatre played a varied repertoire to country audiences.

Country Library Services

VILLAGE libraries have received many more books. The Ministry of Culture is supplying tens of millions more books and booklets for sale in rural areas. In many Regions a movement to collect books for State and collective farm libraries, and for village school libraries, has begun. The experience of the Lvov Region, in the Ukrainian SSR, is interesting. In the Lenin District of Lvov city, 26,444 copies of books were collected in only three months and handed over to the Lvov Regional Library for processing (cataloguing, etc.). These books will be handed on to district and village libraries. More than 17,000 books were collected as a gift to rural workers from working people in the Zheleznodorozhni District of Lvov. In the Krasnoarmeisk District more than 14,000 books were handed in for village libraries by factory and office workers

* Population about 500,000.

and by students. Thanks to help of this kind there are now 207 more village libraries functioning in the Lvov Region.

Our town libraries have many recently published books which they could with advantage hand over to district and village libraries, where they would be of great assistance to the readers. The fine example set by Lvov, and by the other towns which have begun large-scale book collecting for village libraries, will be emulated by intellectuals in the towns. All branches of the Ministry of Culture must support this movement in every possible way, so that village libraries all over the country may be enriched.

Shortcomings

TRULY gigantic work has been done by the Soviet State in helping to raise the cultural level of the countryside. It must, however, be admitted that the work done by many cultural and educational bodies in the countryside remains backward and is inadequate as regards the development of socialist agriculture. The work of many cultural bodies in the countryside is cut off from economic and political tasks and from the practical work of the collective and State farms and of the machine and tractor stations, their invaluable experience being meagrely and inadequately popularised. The cultural requirements of varying sections of the rural public (women, the elderly, the youth) are quite inadequately catered for. Village club and library workers often lack the necessary initiative and fail to popularise books among the adult rural public. An example of this is offered by the Kasilsky Rural Soviet (Agdashk District, Azerbaidzhan SSR), where the village library has only four readers out of over 500 households.

Branches of the Ministry of Culture give insufficient help to rural cultural workers. The Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge is wrong to concentrate its activities mainly in the towns. It is time this underestimation of rural cultural and educational work was stopped and our maximum strength concentrated on improving it.

Art in Everyday Life

IT is not only by reading books, journals and newspapers, by listening-in, by cinema, concert and theatre going, by attending exhibitions of painting and sculpture, that Soviet people absorb advanced socialist culture. Everything around one in everyday life—from houses and buildings and the layout of streets and parks to interior decoration, furniture and domestic appliances—influences the citizen's cultural make-up and the development of good or bad artistic taste. It is a fact that even today, in many of our public buildings, in rest-homes, sanatoria, hotels, dining-rooms and restaurants, railway stations, airports, the walls are hung with paintings of low artistic level, sometimes the merest hack work, and there is sculpture about that distorts the human image. In many Parks of Culture, and in some stadiums, there are to be seen plaster figures of sportsmen distorted in proportions and awkward and unnatural in pose. Along our highways are to be found crudely daubed large-scale hoardings and monotonous pieces of sculpture oil-painted in unnatural colours. Clearly the term "art" is not applicable to such products.

Our art organisations do not seem to pay any real attention to the layout of public buildings, while many ministries and departments which finance and arrange layout are unwilling to consider the views of specialists or to draw in qualified artists and specialists; instead they entrust the whole thing to people who know nothing about it.

Matters are particularly bad as regards the production of everyday objects. It is very difficult to find in the shops a good piece of china, bronze, marble or carved wood fit to put on a table. Yet we have fine craftsmen capable of

producing highly artistic objects for every branch of everyday art. The trouble is that artists and art specialists are not members of the art councils of the various production ministries concerned with the decorative and applied arts, and very poor specimens are being passed for mass production. Lack of care, lack of taste and indifference to the public's artistic demands are still to be met with. Even well-made reproductions from the classic painters are sometimes ruined by caprice or ignorance on the part of workers in the industrial co-operatives: the format of the work is altered by putting the reproduction into a round frame without regard to the frame's suitability to the original painting (for example, Shishkin's *Morning in a Pinewood* and Kramskoi's *Unknown Girl*).

It is the duty of the creative organisations of the enterprises concerned, and of the trading organisations, to take businesslike steps to create objects of high artistic quality, and thereby to contribute to the development of good taste and to the satisfaction of the multifarious demands of the public.

Future Development

It must not be forgotten that the level of cultural and educational work depends on all those of us who work in the field of culture, on our own recognition of the responsibility to be shouldered by every Soviet citizen for the tasks entrusted to him.

When we complain, for example, and justly, of poor reproductions of paintings or of the dull colours in which our papers and books are often printed, or of a publication's bad layout and typography, we are, after all, taking ourselves to task as well: we are the factory and office workers, the engineers and technicians in the printing industry, and the workers in the chemical industry, on whom the quality of our publications so largely depends.

When we frequently, and justifiably, complain that on some radio sets the reception is poor and the loudspeakers transmit the news in a hoarse croak, we know perfectly well that the quality of those sets and speakers depends on the work of the radio industry workers.

When the parents of millions of Soviet children are rightly annoyed that some children's books and textbooks are printed on bad paper, making it hard to teach good taste and love of books from an early age, many people are responsible, including the timber industry workers and the paper industry workers.

When we express righteous dissatisfaction at the fact that our amateur groups and societies are short of musical instruments, or that the instruments they do purchase are sometimes poor in quality, the elimination of this defect depends on the workers in the branches of industry concerned.

As in any other great undertaking to build something new, in the cultural sphere much depends on the organisational, cultural and educational work of the actual people on the job.

Bureaucratic red-tape, the existence of a gulf between the public and the operating machinery, is completely un-Soviet and at variance with the far-reaching democracy of our system; and such methods of "administration" and "leadership" are particularly insufferable in the cultural field. Socialist culture is by nature a culture belonging to, serving and drawing inspiration from the people.

Typically bureaucratic working methods are unfortunately no rarity in cultural institutions. Such, manifestly, is the practice of settling the fate of a play, a script, a film or a book on the word of one single person—generally the editor or the publisher's reader. The duties of an editor or a publisher's reader are, of course, responsible and honourable, but in literature and art it is particularly important to have comprehensive and constructive discussion

of scripts, films, plays, productions, musical compositions, paintings, works of sculpture and architecture. In such discussions a decisive role is played by the lively interchange of opinion among the cultural workers themselves; the real social significance, meaning and artistic value of a given work of imagination emerge during the discussion.

Workers in the field of culture, therefore, must cauterise every manifestation of bureaucracy, and in every way possible develop a lively creative spirit in the leadership of cultural development.

Abridged from *Kommunist*, 14, 1954 (September).

Translated by Eleanor Fox.

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THE INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

V. G. Yakovlev

MY aim is to try to show, on the basis of a few facts, the principles and the present state of the cultural relations existing between the peoples of the Soviet Union and other countries, primarily Great Britain. We in the Soviet Union perceive at least two important aims in maintaining cultural relations with the peoples of other countries. I shall begin with the first of these aims, and will turn, a little later, to the second.

The first aim, then, is to study and to make discerning use of the cultural achievements of the peoples of other countries in order to enrich and develop our own national cultures. Lenin, the founder of the Soviet State, said that socialist culture can be built "... only through precise knowledge of the culture created by the entire development of mankind". Thus, cultural exchange is vitally necessary for the internal development of a country, for its science, literature and art, and for the cultural growth of its people. This, of course, presupposes bilateral, mutual exchange and not an egoistic utilisation of the work of other nations without this mutual approach. Incidentally, speaking of Soviet people, we are often reproached not for egoism, but for the reverse : our readiness to share the results of our progress is interpreted as political propaganda.

These reproaches are wrong and tendentious. We offer other nations examples of the ballets of Chaikovsky, Asafyev and Gliere ; the music of Glinka, Mussorgsky, Shostakovich and Khachaturyan ; the books of Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Pushkin, Gorky and Sholokhov ; and the science of Lomonosov, Mendeleyev, Pavlov and Michurin. We make an approach to other nations and willingly share with them what is most valuable, most humane, in Soviet national culture.

We are aware that not everyone agrees with the realist nature of our literature and art ; but actually western realist art, particularly the greatest of its works of art created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is unsurpassed in the main and is today a source of pleasure and national pride to all enlightened people.

Many do not like the philosophical science of the Soviet Union. But we do not impose dialectical materialism on anyone. And why, we ask, should British people regard the Russians as being responsible for the Englishmen Smith and Ricardo, whose English political economy formed the basis of Marx's theory of labour value, that same Marx to whom Britain gave shelter and whose grave lies in a London cemetery ? The science of dialectical materialism has been of invaluable assistance to the peoples of the Soviet Union.

We can only thank the British people for their share in contributing to the creation of a scientific philosophy that suits the tastes, the national characteristics and mode of life of the Soviet people.

It should be said that certain aspects of our practical experience have been useful to countries with a different social system ; this applies in particular to the Soviet experience of planned economy. India, for example, is today working successfully with a five-year plan of development for her national economy. We Soviet people, furthermore, rightly take some pride in our experience in eliminating illiteracy and in systematically reducing prices each year.

We can still point to much that is unfinished and to many shortcomings. We are trying to put this right and to learn how from other peoples, including the British. As I said in the beginning, our science of philosophy also teaches us to

learn from others. This science teaches us that every nation, great and small, offers to the general treasure-house of culture a valuable contribution which is peculiar to that nation alone, thereby augmenting and enriching world culture. It was Stalin who put this idea forward ; I would like to give an example to illustrate this point.

We know, for example, that Pushkin and Lermontov had a passion for Byron's poetry, which had a great influence in Russia. And so in the poems of Pushkin and Lermontov we sometimes clearly hear an echo of the motifs of the British bard. Galsworthy names Turgenev as his teacher ; Chekhov's influence on Katherine Mansfield's work is generally recognised. Here it is not a matter of mechanically adopting methods or of imitating, but a question of profound, mutual influence and enrichment.

We feel that in order to take an active part in the process of cultural exchange (which is an integral part of civilisation and is just as possible among countries as all other forms of co-operation, irrespective of social systems) the peoples of Great Britain and the Soviet Union should both undertake a careful study of the science, literature, music, paintings and films produced in other countries and adopt what seems to them most acceptable and useful.

We consider that science, literature and music have their own motherland, they are national ; but at the same time they know no frontiers, and in this sense are international.

We have always adopted, and will continue to adopt, from other countries, particularly from Great Britain, the splendid, humanising elements of their culture. We, for our part, offer equally serious and valuable contributions. Moreover, we can assure everyone in Britain, every English mother, that children will learn nothing deleterious from Soviet books. It is already generally recognised that racial discrimination, the idea of the social inequality of the sexes, the relishing of criminal offences and pornography are all foreign to Soviet literature. Propaganda for war in any form is prohibited in the Soviet Union by special legislation.

Without either side imposing its ideas on the other, and with respect on both sides for the other's mode of life, our peoples can bring about cultural exchange on a broad scale to their mutual advantage and profit.

Well-organised opportunities have been created in the Soviet Union for this sort of exchange with all the countries of the world. We have a publishing house that specialises in the publication of foreign literature and another that publishes books in foreign languages. The central library of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., the Lenin Library in Moscow and the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library in Leningrad carry on a broad international exchange of books. "International Books" ("Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga"), a joint stock company in the U.S.S.R., which has its opposite numbers in various countries abroad, sells Soviet literature and buys foreign books. The All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), founded almost thirty years ago in the Soviet Union, the social organisation that I represent, arranges a broad exchange of delegations, exhibitions, literature and a variety of scientific material.

Soviet scientists are endeavouring to widen relations to the utmost. In recent years, the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. and other Soviet scientific institutions have received several dozen delegations and individual groups of scientists from countries abroad. These have included scientists from China, Great Britain, Italy, the German Democratic Republic, France, Poland, India, Korea and Finland, in all from thirty different countries. In turn, Soviet scientists regularly travel to other countries and take part in scientific conferences and congresses. Among the countries that Soviet scientists have visited in the past three or four years one can name China, Britain, the United States, Japan, Canada, the German Democratic Republic, Holland, Poland, Hungary, France, Switzerland, Italy and Denmark.

Experience has proved that where there is good will in a country even differing convictions do not prevent advantageous, scientific co-operation.

Soviet scientific publications, particularly those of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., are sent to seventy-three countries under mutual exchange arrangements. But we must say here quite frankly that Soviet scientists do not always meet with a mutual desire to co-operate.

In response to requests by Soviet intellectuals and students, a special library of foreign literature was established in Moscow, and it has a rich basic collection of more than 1,500,000 titles.

Many scientific and public libraries in other Soviet towns have imposing collections of foreign books. These are used by many thousands of people. Interest in foreign literature in the original languages is fostered through the teaching of a foreign language to children and young people in Soviet secondary schools and higher educational institutions, and at specialised philological faculties and foreign language institutes.

The English language is particularly popular in the U.S.S.R. For instance, forty per cent of the pupils in the fifth classes of our secondary schools study English. While learning the language the pupils make use of the works of British and American writers—I quote a few from the syllabus : Shakespeare, Daniel Defoe, Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, Oscar Wilde, Jerome K. Jerome, Longfellow, Walter Scott, Tennyson, Byron, Robert Louis Stevenson, G. K. Chesterton, Katherine Mansfield, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, Ethel Voynich, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Jack London, Conan Doyle and O. Henry.

For school reading the publishing house that produces books in foreign languages this year published the works of 267 foreign authors in nine languages, including Latin works by Virgil, Horace, Livy, Ovid, Cicero and Cæsar.

Foreign books are translated into the Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian and other languages of the peoples inhabiting the Soviet Union, and are published on a very large scale.

After the Revolution, during the period when many years which could have been used for creative work had to be spent in civil war and the second world war, about 247,000,000 copies of the books of more than 1,500 different foreign authors were published in the Soviet Union.

Of the English works of *belles-lettres*, books by 103 authors were published. It may be of interest to give some of the larger prints. Dickens's works were published in 3,852,400 copies ; H. G. Wells's in 3,408,900 copies ; Shakespeare's in 2,445,300 copies ; Daniel Defoe's in 1,803,700 copies ; Galsworthy's in 1,420,800 copies.

Daniel Defoe's books have been published in thirty-three of the languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union ; Rudyard Kipling's in thirty-two ; Shakespeare's in twenty-five. The works of British authors have been published in fifty-five languages ; American in fifty languages ; French in forty-nine ; German in fifty-five ; Danish in thirty-one, etc.

The cultural revolution in the Soviet Union has now made it possible for millions of formerly illiterate people to read not only their own books, but also the immortal works of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Balzac, Cervantes and Goethe.

Many people do not know that books and periodicals are printed in the Soviet Union in 119 languages, including forty languages of peoples and nationalities which before the Revolution had no written language of their own. Now they too—the Maris, Yakuts, Yevenki, Buryats and Chuvash—are reading works by Shakespeare, Dickens and other British, French and German writers in their own native languages.

And translations of Shakespeare, Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, R. L. Stevenson, Byron, E. L. Voynich and Daniel Defoe have been published in special type for the blind.

This far from complete information will help to show that Soviet people are truly, and not just in words, delving deeply into the inexhaustible springs of world culture and that they regard it as vitally necessary for them to do so.

One should add that between 1947 and June 1954 the publishing house in the Soviet Union which produces foreign literature alone published 136 titles of books on natural science written by different British authors and that the names of Newton and Darwin, the great scientists who today enjoy world recognition, are known to the youngest of Soviet schoolchildren.

Academician Vavilov wrote a special book about Isaac Newton ; Academician Timiryazev wrote a number of books about the life and work of Charles Darwin, including several of a popular nature. And here I pass over the many scientific works and monographs on various aspects of British life.

It should be pointed out that we not only want to learn from the British people, through their books, what their science and art have created. People in the Soviet Union want to get a living picture of people in all stations of life in Great Britain : they are interested in their everyday life and their way of thinking. In this respect books serve as the finest medium.

And so, when we speak about English books in the Soviet Union, books published in millions of copies, we bear in mind that Soviet readers who have never been in Britain will see from these books how people live in your country.

The Russian author Korolenko, describing his first introduction to Dickens, tells of how he surreptitiously took his elder brother's copy of *Dombey and Son*. I "was introduced to dear Polly, the nurse who was so kind to poor Florence, and to the ailing boy who asked to go to the seaside and wanted, with the early wisdom of an ailing child, to know what it was the sea was saying. . . . I felt that even lovesick Toots was not really such a blockhead . . ." writes Korolenko. "Because I felt that my brother might soon return, I nervously swallowed page after page, wanting to find out all I could about Florence's friends and enemies. And there in the foreground was always the figure of Mr. Dombey, significant already because of the terrible punishment he was doomed to experience. . . . During the evening my brother finished the novel, and again I sat and listened as he sometimes laughed aloud and at other times angrily thumped his fist on the table . . ."

"Aha ! " some may say, just as an Englishman said to me recently in Moscow, "Dickens again ! You publish Dickens's works because you want the Soviet reader to think that England today is like it was in Dickens's time." My reply is just what I said then. We love and appreciate the classic writers in general, because, like all true, serious artists, they wrote the truth. What is more, do we not publish, in the Soviet Union, the works of Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov and of our own Jonathan Swifts—the satirists Saltykov-Shchedrin and Gogol—so that Soviet readers will see the Russia of the nineteenth century in their own native land today ? It is impossible to know the Soviet people and their national character, to understand our revolution, without some knowledge of life in former Russia, just as it is not possible, it seems to us, to follow the process of development and to understand the Britain of today without knowing Fielding, Dickens, Galsworthy or Bernard Shaw. One can only hope that there will be more and more glorious names of this kind attached to British soil.

Samuel Marshak, one of our Soviet poets, undertook the difficult enterprise of translating Shakespeare's sonnets, and he did it splendidly. This is indicated by the pleasure one derives from the music of the English lines as rendered into Russian and by the testimony given by English people who know the Russian language. Marshak has also translated English popular ballads and nursery rhymes, and poems by Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Tennyson, Kipling and Robert Burns.

We know that English poetry has been an inspiration to many Soviet com-

posers who have put the verses of the poets to music. But of this I will speak later.

The Soviet stage produces scores of plays by foreign playwrights. Among them the works of British playwrights occupy a worthy place. Since 1950, for example, twelve of Shakespeare's plays have been performed, or are being performed today, in eighty theatres in different towns from Moscow to places like Kovrov, Bugulma, Kansk and Ordzhonikidze, the names of which are not even widely known in England. *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew* are especially popular in the Soviet Union. Sheridan's plays are at present being performed in sixteen theatres, Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* and *The Good-natured Man* are showing at seventeen theatres, *Pygmalion* and others of Shaw's plays can be seen in thirty theatres, and E. L. Voynich's *Gadfly* in twenty-five theatres. Plays by Fielding and Fletcher are also being staged at the present time.

Besides these performances of foreign plays, more than thirty operas by foreign composers are staged in the Soviet Union and approximately the same number of foreign operettas. Foreign symphony music is also very popular.

Of the English composers, besides Handel the Soviet music public know and love the music of Edward Elgar, Vaughan Williams and John Ireland. To this day we recall the performance in London on Soviet Army Day, February 23, 1944, of Arnold Bax's "Triumphal Odes", which the composer dedicated to the Soviet Army.

The successful performances in Britain given by Soviet actors, singers and musicians during the past two or three years, and the favourable references to their skill in the press, give us reason to believe that the British taste for music is close to our own, and this affords additional opportunities for a mutual exchange in the sphere of music. In particular, it would be good to ensure that English musicians visit the Soviet Union, not by chance, but regularly.

I have already mentioned that works of art by English writers have inspired many Soviet composers to write new music. Recently we witnessed in Moscow how members of the British parliamentary delegation set out for the Bolshoi Theatre with unconcealed, ironical curiosity to see Galina Ulanova's performance in the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare turned into a ballet! But it seems they enjoyed it. It does, indeed, give all the lyrical charm of *Romeo and Juliet*'s first timid love, all the stupidity of the strife between the Montague and Capulet families and all the devastating tragedy of the denouement, which brings tears to the eyes of the audience. Shakespeare's unfading genius is accurately and truly interpreted in the Soviet Union through the new, and what might appear to be somewhat unexpected, medium of the ballet.

A few words about painting. The sympathies of Soviet art specialists and the general public are on the side of realism. The Russian classic painters—Repin, Surikov, Kramskoi, Shishkin, Vasnetsov, Levitan—gave us our taste for realist art. At one time a number of Soviet artists were drawn towards French impressionism, and even went as far as abstract art in their work; but these distractions are now past, and have left no marked influence on the realist trend in Soviet painting. Besides the chief treasure-houses of national paintings and graphic art, the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and the Russian Museum in Leningrad, there are two large museums in the Soviet Union which house the paintings of West European artists. They are the State Hermitage in Leningrad and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. Among their paintings are pictures by Raphael, Rembrandt, Rubens, Poussin, Millais, Corot, Picasso and others. The largest picture gallery is the Hermitage; but the Pushkin Museum contains 5,500 paintings, sculptures and works of graphic art. Among them are pictures by Reynolds, Lawrence, Romney, Raeburn, Hoppner and Constable. In the Leningrad Hermitage there are several dozen pictures by English masters, including Gainsborough's portrait of the Duchess of Beaufort. Twenty-eight pictures by great English painters are to be found in these two museums. Thus,

the Soviet people enjoy a modest opportunity of judging from original paintings of the magnificent skill in portrait and landscape painting for which the English school is famous.

Unfortunately, the Soviet public knows the work of modern British artists primarily only from books. Apparently British people, unfortunately, are also insufficiently informed about modern Soviet painting.

I think that there should be no serious obstacles in the way of an exchange, let us say, of exhibitions of paintings or of graphic art, such as we have already arranged with a number of countries. For example, a recent exhibition of fine arts from India, held in Moscow, was very successful.

A great deal could be done, in particular, if it were considered desirable in Britain, to liven up the exchange of films. In recent years, dozens of film festivals have been held in Moscow and other Soviet towns, at which foreign films were shown, particularly the Chinese, Italian, Polish, French, German, Indian and other film festivals, which were frequently attended by foreign script-writers, producers and actors, and afforded great opportunities for rapprochement and for a useful exchange of experience.

Particularly useful has been the contact made between Soviet and foreign cultural leaders and the direct, free discussions they have had. It is this that the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Soviet trade unions, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Academy of Sciences and other public bodies and state and scientific institutions in the Soviet Union wish to promote to the full.

In the past three years alone, about 1,500 foreign delegations from more than sixty countries have paid visits to the Soviet Union. People of all political and religious persuasions, peasants and workers, scientists, actors, and often people who own millions, come to visit us. They all enjoy the hospitality of the Soviet people and study the life of our people and the development of our socialist culture, sometimes even from a prejudiced viewpoint. Among our guests there are sometimes people who later write what is not true about us, but the absolute majority take a sober view of the experiment of the Soviet State.

During the post-war years, more than 4,000 visitors from all parts of the world have visited the Soviet Union at the invitation of the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) alone. In this period ten delegations went to the Soviet Union from Britain. These were chiefly delegations from the British Soviet Friendship Society and the British Society for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union. During the same period, VOKS received invitations and sent five delegations to Britain.

Since the war, VOKS has sent 154 delegations, emissaries of friendship and culture, to other countries, apart from those that visited Great Britain. Among these delegations were important scientists, writers, composers, artists and public figures. An example of the sort of delegation VOKS sends abroad is that which is now (November 1954) in Britain in response to the invitation of the British Soviet Friendship Society and the Society for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union.

The exchange of artists and orchestral ensembles and the foreign theatrical performances in the Soviet Union, in particular that of the Comédie Française, as well as the tours that Soviet theatres and ballet performers have made abroad, testify to the ever-widening cultural relations of the Soviet peoples.

If these trips do not always turn out well, objective observers will admit that it is not through the fault of the Soviet Union. Soviet people and Soviet institutions and organisations always make loyal or, more correctly, friendly and ready use of every opportunity of establishing contact and widening cultural relations with foreign countries.

I must not omit to mention that in the cultural exchange which is taking part

between Britain and the Soviet Union the initial and organising role is chiefly played by British voluntary organisations like the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R., the British Soviet Friendship Society and the Scotland-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society.

If the peoples of various countries are to avoid living in isolation, are to avoid acquiring absurd and false ideas about each other's mode of life and thought, then they must be tolerant concerning what divides them and talk more about what unites them than about what divides them.

To this end, cultural exchange and co-operation are necessary and extremely useful. And we need such co-operation primarily for peace. Peace is not merely absence of war, but an essential condition for the development of culture and the preservation of all the cultural values accumulated by nations. This means the science laboratories of Cambridge and Oxford, the British Museum, the palaces and, as well, the little old, modest houses where the great sons of the British people who brought them world fame as an advanced, civilised nation did their thinking. From these great men, who sang the praises of their people, we Soviet people, too, have learned to understand and love you and your fair motherland.

When we Soviet people pronounce the word peace, we recall the tragic fate of centres of culture like Berlin and Dresden, Stalingrad and Coventry, and the fine monuments at Peterhof, near Leningrad. History has taught us to understand that war, like every other terrible form of barbarism, does not spare the labours of generations and does not discriminate between military objectives, the infant's cradle and the immortal works of Hogarth, Constable, Raphael, Rembrandt, Dürer or Repin.

The desire for peace is not only a peace policy, but a desire for the development of culture, for the triumph of life over death, which Shakespeare wisely called : " Peace, dear nurse of arts, plenties, and joyful births . . . "

Unfortunately, some people frequently forget these words of Shakespeare, but they are not foreign to anyone who is concerned about culture and the fate of civilisation.

It was said long ago that when the guns speak the Muses are silent. It should be added that not only are the Muses silent but, in wartime these days, the greatest cultural treasures frequently perish irrevocably.

I mentioned at the beginning that international cultural exchange is necessary to every nation for the enrichment and development of its own national culture.

In conclusion I would like to say that there is a second task connected with cultural exchange which is very important in the present situation of still outstanding international tension, and that is the achievement of better mutual understanding among peoples. The solution of this task leads to the strengthening of sympathy and friendship among nations. May co-operation between the great British and great Soviet nations, with their wealths of culture, unite us in the service of mankind, and in the service of the cause of universal peace !

Abridged from an address delivered at the SCR on November 29, 1954.

Translated by Violet Dutt.

THE CULTURE OF SOVIET TURKMENISTAN

K. M. Kuliev



A paper delivered at the 23rd International Congress
of Orientalists, Cambridge, August 23, 1954

TURKMENISTAN is a country with an ancient civilisation. In the fourth and third millennia B.C. agricultural settlements already existed on the territory of modern Turkmenistan (the Anau civilisation). The inhabitants of these settlements were acquainted with the technique of irrigation, had domestic animals, built houses of brick, used metal tools and bartered with the neighbouring tribes. In the first millennium B.C. the ancestors of the Turkoman people—the Dahae and the Massagetae and other kindred tribes—had built a system of large canals, irrigated arid plainlands and transformed them into flourishing regions. The painstaking labour of the peasants, herdsmen and artisans ensured the economic and cultural growth of the Parthian kingdom. Archaeologists who in the post-war years explored the ruins of Nisa, the ancient capital of the Parthians, have discovered splendid specimens of Parthian art—ivory rhyta covered with the finest of carvings and richly decorated with gold and jewels, marble sculptures of great artistic beauty, and finely ornamented weapons. Soviet archaeologists have also discovered the economic archives of the Parthian kings, which consisted of more than 1,500 documents and gave evidence of a well-developed system of writing and of the existence of a complex administrative and tax system in the Parthian state. Parthian architecture reached a high state of development and to some extent its influence is still felt in Turkoman architectural style.

The growth of culture continued in later years under early feudalism. There were many large cities, such as Merv, Urgenj, Nisa and others, on the territory of Turkmenistan in the ninth to twelfth centuries, with a large population of artisans and merchants. Agriculture was on a high level; the irrigation system of the Merv Oasis was considered a model throughout the whole of the Middle and Near East. According to Yakut, in the twelfth century, in Merv there were ten libraries which contained tens of thousands of volumes, and also schools training civil servants. The historian as-Sam'ani, who like several other scholars and writers came from Merv, was the author of valuable works on history and geography. However, continuous feudal wars and invasions hampered the further development of the culture of the Turkoman people. The results of wars were especially damaging for Turkmenistan, one of those countries where artificial irrigation ensured the prosperity of the population and where, consequently, one devastating war during which the system of irrigation was barbarously destroyed might cause a whole region to be deserted and wipe out civilisation for hundreds of years. This happened in fact to the Merv Oasis as well as to many other oases of Turkmenistan.

The Turkoman people gave birth to many prominent scholars and artists. One of them was the famous eighteenth-century poet Makhtumkuli, whose poems expressed the aspirations of the Turkoman people for a life of peace, freedom and happiness. Makhtumkuli was the founder of classical Turkoman poetry; his influence is felt in various literatures beyond the borders of his native land. Makhtumkuli's writings perished during his lifetime in one of the feudal wars, but nevertheless his poems became known in Turkmenistan and are kept alive for ever in the memory of the people. What was started

by Makhtumkuli was continued by many other Turkoman poets of the nineteenth century—Zelili, Kemineh, Mollanepes, Seyyidi and others. Along with poetry, other forms of literature and folklore—tales, songs, proverbs and riddles, in which the ancient wisdom of the people was reflected—were widely spread among the Turkomans.

After Turkmenistan was joined to Russia the spread of Russian culture among the Turkomans became possible. Russian schools, books, doctors and teachers appeared in the country. However, the colonial policy of tsarism hindered both the spread of Russian culture among the Turkoman people and the free development of the Turkoman national culture.

Only after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution did the culture of the Turkoman people really begin to develop.

The October Revolution freed the oppressed peoples of tsarist Russia from social and national oppression. The Turkoman people became the masters of their own fate, the builders of their national culture.

From the very first days after the organisation of Soviet States in Russian Central Asia, which included the Transcaspian province populated by Turkomans, great constructive work was carried out as Lenin advised, aimed at raising the cultural level of the Uzbeks, Turkomans, Tadzhiks and other peoples of Central Asia. The task was to create their new culture, a culture national in form and socialist in content.

In September 1920, Lenin signed the decree founding the Turkestan (now Central Asian) State University. This was a highly important event in the life of the peoples of Central Asia. A large scientific centre was being created on modern lines for preparing experts in all branches of scientific and practical activity.

The Russian people gave invaluable aid to the peoples of Central Asia in creating this university and supplying it with professors and teachers and laboratory equipment. As early as April 1920 a special train with professors and members of the teaching staff arrived in Tashkent from Moscow. “The ‘University Train’”, the newspapers reported, “brought full equipment for several laboratories and clinics and a library of 20,000 volumes.”

Great attention was paid to promoting teaching in the native languages. With this purpose in view modern Soviet schools were opened in villages, native teachers were trained and text-books in the native languages were published. By 1924 in the Transcaspian region alone 170 schools with 16,900 pupils were already functioning, whereas in 1914 there were only fifty-eight schools with 6,782 pupils.

Much also was done in founding cultural centres, clubs and libraries, fostering the development of literature and art and improving the public medical service.

The Soviet Socialist Republic of Turkmenistan was organised in 1925 when the several national republics of Central Asia were founded. Now the Turkoman people had a State of their own and this created even more favourable conditions for the national development of the Turkoman people.

The remarkable successes of the following years, especially those of the five-year plans, in developing industry and agriculture in the republic, were accompanied by a further rise in the standard of living of the Turkoman people and by a steady cultural growth.

By the time of the beginning of the third five-year plan the republic possessed a network of elementary and secondary schools, clubs, libraries and other cultural establishments. In 1938-39, 1,347 elementary and secondary schools with 204,600 pupils were already functioning. Besides this, 7,986 young people were receiving their education in technical and other special schools.

In order to prepare the specialists and scholars needed, several institutes were organised in the republic. The Agricultural Institute was founded in 1930,

the Pedagogical Institute in 1931, and the Medical Institute in 1932. In 1938-39 the number of undergraduates was 2,355.

In October 1940, by a decision of the Soviet Government, the Turkmenistan affiliated branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was organised in the city of Ashkhabad. It was a decision of major political and economic significance for the republic.

All this is evidence of the tremendous effort which has been devoted to the cultural development of the Turkoman people since the victory of the October Revolution.

Virtually a cultural revolution has taken place in the republic.

Turkmenistan, where in the past there were only seven literate persons out of every thousand, was transformed into a republic of universal literacy. In 1953 the expenditure on education rose a hundredfold as compared with the period from 1924 to 1927. There are now more than 11,000 teachers in the republic, whereas in 1914 there were only 272. Ten teachers have been elected members of the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and the Soviet Republic of Turkmenistan and 718 are members of local Soviets.

Before the revolution, in all of Central Asia, there was not a single university or college. At the present time in Turkmenistan alone there are six colleges and more than thirty technical schools, in which teachers, agriculturists, doctors and nurses needed for the republic are trained.

The Academy of Sciences of Soviet Turkmenistan, founded in 1951, is the scientific centre of the republic, with many research institutes and establishments.

The institutes of the Academy of Sciences, in close collaboration with the departments of the Turkmenistan State University, founded in 1950, and with other colleges, carry out a large programme of studies on the history, culture, natural resources and geography of Turkmenistan.

The collective farms of the republic are greatly aided by the Agricultural and Biological Institutes, which are working on the increase of the cotton yield. The Agricultural Institute developed a new variety of cotton plant, which differs from other types in that its leaves fall off when ready for picking, thus enabling cotton-picking machines to be used on large areas without the preliminary application of chemicals.

Members of the staff of the Institute of Livestock Breeding are largely engaged in scientific studies on the cattle-breeding farms and studs in the Karakum desert. They are successfully raising a new breed of cattle well adapted to the conditions of Central Asia. A great deal has been done in the field of studying fodder crops; a collection of plants has been gathered comprising three thousand specimens.

The work of the Institute of History of the Academy has led to important discoveries by way of ethnographic research and archaeological excavations in Nisa, Merv and other places. The Institute has prepared for publication *The History of the Turkmen SSR* in two volumes.

The Institute of Language and Literature carries out a large programme of studies on the literary heritage of the Turkoman people. The fine poetry of Makhtumkuli, Kemineh, Mollanepes and other classical Turkoman authors has only now become well known to the wide masses of the Turkoman people. These works have been repeatedly published in large editions. At the present time the Institute is engaged in compiling several dictionaries of the Turkoman language.

The scholars of Soviet Turkmenistan, among whom there are about forty professors and research workers with a doctor's degree and 170 masters of science and arts and senior lecturers, are devoting their efforts to making science and technology serve the interests of peaceful labour and the development of the economy and the culture of the republic.

Before the October Revolution the population of Turkmenistan had no idea

what was meant by such words as theatre, cinema, club, library, and so on. Now there are five theatres, scores of cinemas and many hundreds of clubs and libraries in the republic.

In the evenings the crowded halls of the theatres are filled with the sounds of Chaikovsky's and Dargomyzhsky's music ; on the opera stage one may see the unforgettable characters of *Eugene Onegin* and *Faust*, in the Stalin Theatre classic plays by Russian and foreign playwrights are produced. Here one can see Gogol's *The Inspector General*, Shakespeare's *Othello* and contemporary Soviet plays.

The Theatre of Opera and Ballet and the Stalin Theatre are national theatres, where a host of fine actors, genuine artists of the stage, have appeared. Among them are the People's Artist of the Soviet Union, Aman Kulmamedov, the People's Artists of the Turkmen SSR, Altı Kuarliev, Maya Kulieva, Suray Muradova, Bazar Amanov, and many others.

The Soviet system, which created the opportunity for the harmonious development of personality and talent, has made exceptional achievements an everyday occurrence. What, for instance, would have been the lot of Aman Kulmamedov, a former shepherd boy from Geok-Tepeh, before the Revolution ? He would not even have dreamt of becoming an actor. Now Aman Kulmamedov is an outstanding actor of the Soviet theatre, a Stalin Prize winner, the creator of a long line of stage characters.

Maya Kulieva, who was brought up in an orphanage at Bezmein, is one of the finest singers of the republic and is a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of Turkmenistan. The young artist has created charming interpretations of the parts of Pushkin's Tatyana, Gretchen in *Faust* and the heroines of the Turkmenian operas, Abadan, Shasenem, Leyli and Zohra.

The lives of Aman Kulmamedov and Maya Kulieva are typical of those of many other Turkomans educated under the Soviet system.

The culture of Soviet Turkmenistan is closely linked up with the fraternal culture of the Russian people and owes much to it. Outstanding masters of Soviet Russian art helped in the education of the young members of the new Turkoman intelligentsia. The most prominent musicians of the Turkmen Republic studied in the Moscow Chaikovsky Conservatoire : the Stalin prize winner, composer Veli Mukhatov, the composers Dangatar Ovezov, Ashir Kuliev and others. One of the finest artists of Turkmenistan, Aikhan Khadzhiyev, studied in the Moscow Surikov Art Institute. Izzat Klychev studied in the Leningrad Repin Institute. His teacher was the People's Artist of the USSR, Boris Yohanson. That outstanding Soviet artist helped the young Turkoman make a fine painter.

Turkmenistan was formerly considered a backward province, remote from the civilised world. Today there are also places in the republic which are remote, but they are no longer backward. Radio sets can be found everywhere, movies reach the most out-of-the-way villages. The dialogues of many Soviet films have been translated into the Turkoman language by the Ashkhabad Cinema Studio. In 1953 the studio translated fourteen films and many scientific films and produced thirty-five issues of the newsreel " Soviet Turkmenistan ". The studio is now working on the film *The Son of a Shepherd*.

Before the Revolution not a single newspaper or magazine was published in Turkmenistan in the Turkoman language. Now there are sixty-five newspapers and ten magazines. Every year hundreds of books are issued in the Turkoman language. The total number of copies published in 1953 by the State Publishing House of Turkmenistan alone reached 1,000,000. Many classics of Russian and foreign literature—works of Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Shakespeare and others—have been translated into the Turkoman language.

Outstanding works by Turkoman writers have been published. The books of the Stalin prize winner Berdy Kerbabayev have been translated into the

languages of many of the peoples of the USSR. Berdy Kerbabayev is one of the founders of the realist school in the Turkoman novel. The close and careful study of classic Russian and Soviet literature aided Kerbabayev and other Soviet writers of Turkmenistan in creating this school.

The books of the talented Turkoman poets and novelists Ata Koushutov, Chary Ashirov, Kara Seytliev, Taushan Esenova, Kurbansakhatov, Anna Kousov and others are very popular.

Especially striking are the results of the cultural revolution as regards Turkoman women. Before the October Revolution Turkoman women were deprived not only of civil but of elementary human rights. One fact would be enough to show how oppressed and downtrodden they were—according to the census of 1920 there were only twenty-two literate persons among the 122,000 Turkoman women on the territory of the Transcaspian region, a part of the present-day republic of Turkmenistan.

Now Turkoman women play an active part in all walks of social, political, economic and cultural life in the republic. Since the establishment of Soviet power many Turkoman women have graduated from secondary schools and colleges and have become government officials and social workers. There are hundreds of Turkoman women teachers, doctors, agriculturists and engineers.

Such are some of the facts and figures demonstrating the important successes achieved by the Turkoman people in developing a national Soviet culture of their own. This was made possible by the successful realisation of a correct national policy and by the continuous fraternal aid of the Russian people and other peoples of the Soviet Union.

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THE SOVIET FINE ARTS

D. Shmarinov & A. Kamensky



THE October Socialist Revolution brought with it a fundamental change in the cultural life of the peoples of Russia. 1917 was a historic turning-point in the development of the fine arts. The creative tasks of the artist and the organisational principles of his practical activity changed radically. The great founder of the Soviet State, Vladimir Lenin, defined the new role of art in the following words : “ Art belongs to the people. It must grow deep roots in the very midst of the broad mass of the working people. It must be understood and loved by the masses. It must unite the feelings, thoughts and will of the masses and inspire them. Art must bring the artists among them to life and develop them.”

This guiding principle was embodied in a very extensive programme of measures aimed at consistent democratisation of art. All the large art museums and galleries were at once nationalised and opened to the public at large. The system of art education was basically reformed ; the doors of the different art schools and institutions for higher art education, like the academies, were flung wide open to people from all sections of the population. In the very first months of the Soviet era, hundreds of artists received considerable State commissions. An outstanding part in the revolutionary period was played by Lenin’s “ plan for monuments ” whose purpose was to honour the memory of the great men of science, art, literature and the liberation movement of all countries and peoples by numerous monuments, obelisks and statues.

The road Soviet art travelled in the early years was neither a simple nor an easy one, however. Not all artists knew how to achieve its aim—to bring art closer to the people. Some of them—the formalists and most extreme representatives of the theory of “ art for art’s sake ”—held aloof. There were artists who rejected all the great achievements of art in the past, called them obsolete, and gave themselves up to a senseless creation of “ new ” abstract “ revolutionary ” forms, as they called them, which were quite incomprehensible to the people and incapable of expressing their thoughts and feelings.

The overwhelming majority of Soviet artists, however, went with the people. The path of development of Soviet art was that of a search for ways and forms of portraying a new content. It was accompanied by a fierce struggle against the reactionary, anti-popular, formalist art of the past, and against bourgeois naturalism, with its disregard for content and for the idea.

It became inconceivable after the Revolution for the artist to confine himself to the small circle of his narrow professional interests, to the four walls of his studio, as artists had often done in the past. Events called to the artist, urging him to immerse himself in life, to take an active part in the transformation of life, to glorify the courage and the beauty of the man of the new era, a man fresh from oppression, working to build a better future. “ The streets are our brushes, the squares our palettes ”, exclaimed the great revolutionary poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, thereby stressing the most important feature of Soviet art—its direct and close bond with the people, with their thoughts and interests, their joys and sorrows.

This bond with the people, which gradually grew stronger and broader, is the most essential and characteristic feature of Soviet art. Consider its subject matter and you will see that it is devoted for the most part to the daily life of

our country, its ordinary working people and its heroes, to their thoughts and feelings, their work and their attitude to nature and to love, and finally to their unceasing struggle for peace. Acquaint yourselves more closely with Soviet artists themselves and you will find that they seek material for their work by closely observing and studying the life of the people, by meeting persons from different professions, by going to the four corners of their vast land. The work of the artist in the Soviet Union can be compared with that of a statesman. He has an important social function to fulfil, serving as a real spokesman of society, voicing its feelings and thoughts. This, it should be said, has always been the artist's role in periods of the flowering of art, in ancient Greece, in the days of Pericles, or in Italy during the Renaissance.

Soviet artists are, of course, paid for their work ; social recognition of their talents and the contribution they make is not their only reward. They are assured a steady, regular and large income. The State sees to it that they are well provided for. It goes without saying that no obstacle to the sale of his works to private individuals is put in the artist's way by the laws of the Soviet Union. But the artist is not dependent on the caprice or arbitrary tastes of private dealers. He can give over any work he does, whether a thematic painting or a still life, a genre statuette or an etching, to one of the special State purchasing commissions, which pay very high rates for the work of painters, sculptors and graphic artists. These commissions are guided in the selection and appraisal of the value of such works exclusively by the criterion of artistic merit. The commission's purchases are then added to the collections of the many museums in our country, or to the travelling art shows that go to all parts of the Soviet Union. Works of art are used in the decoration of our theatres, palaces of culture, clubs, railway stations, hotels and other public buildings.

One needs to remember also that painters can take part in the fulfilment of the huge orders the State places for the decoration of various monumental edifices. The number of such orders is constantly on the increase. Hundreds of artists associated with different genres contributed to the decoration of the new buildings of Moscow University, for example, and of the Agricultural Exhibition. Nevertheless, the main form of creative activity among Soviet artists has been, and is, free-lance work, in which they are guided exclusively by their personal wishes, tastes and ideas.

The creative problems of Soviet artists unquestionably bear a close relation to the social nature and purpose of their activity. How is their preference for realism, which has persisted unchanged throughout the entire thirty-seven years' history of Soviet art, to be explained ? It is not, of course, simply a matter of observing the prevalent fashion, or of the accidental and transitory tastes of the period. It is the result of thoroughgoing and very definite laws of art. In serving the people and striving to portray their life in its ordinary as well as festive moments, their heroic exploits and peaceful everyday work, as comprehensively, vividly and, most important of all, as truthfully as possible, the artist simply cannot achieve his aims by any other means than realist ones. Realism and truth to life in art are inseparable.

The term "realism" is often grossly misinterpreted in the West. It is confused, sometimes deliberately, sometimes out of ignorance of the essential aspects of the question, with naturalism or the passive, automatic mirroring of life. Yet basically, in its fundamental principles, both ideological and creative, true realism is diametrically opposed to the dry, uninspired, empirical character of naturalism. Velasquez and Rembrandt, Hogarth and Daumier, Repin and Surikov, Titian and Michelangelo were genuine realists ; there you have true realism as it is expressed in practice ! We are striving to perpetuate their great traditions and, to the best of our ability, are studying and developing the heritage of classical art.

We try to generalise and typify life's manifold phenomena, to maintain all

that is finest in life, to expose all that is reactionary, ignorant and obsolete, all that stands in the way of a happy life for the people. Nothing human is alien to us. We enjoy a good thematic painting depicting the important events of today and of yesterday; a still life that captures the beauty of the objects around us, the gifts of nature, their form, colour and proportions; the bust of a famous contemporary; a watercolour that brings some nook or corner of our country close to us in fresh and living colours. Life is diverse and art is diverse—that is one of the main mottoes of true realism. We have always adhered to this viewpoint and will continue to support it.

The conception of realism has developed with the march of history. Certain essentials—veracity to life, adherence to the advanced ideas of the period—persist in every age. And yet the actual forms of realist art, its content and social purpose, change, and in each epoch take on special and often inimitable colours. Whereas the principal achievement of the realists of ancient Greece, for example, was the delineation of the ideal, harmoniously developed free man, and whereas the progressive artists of the Renaissance placed the highest value on the dignity of the individual, Rembrandt and a number of other great seventeenth-century realists opened out man's inner world to art, his feelings, passions, psychology. The nineteenth century, as represented by artists like Daumier, Courbet or the Russian *Peredvizhniki*, was characterised above all by *critical* realism, a realism that flayed the social ills of the time and called for the transformation of social life on to a new and juster foundation, for the establishment of universal freedom and equality.

The realism of Soviet art we usually call *socialist* realism. This concept does not imply a definition of styles or forms. Socialist realism permits of an infinite variety of stylistic method, of the use of the whole gamut of expressive forms, rejecting only the kind of form that does not give an objective idea of the object portrayed. The term *socialist* refers to the *ideological* content of our realism and only to that. It emphasises that realism in Soviet art is based on socialist ideology, appraising all phenomena of the past and present from the standpoint of that ideology.

We cannot give an exhaustive theoretical exposition of the creative method of socialist realism in this article. We shall speak only of those features that we think it important to stress at the present time.

First of all, there is the clarity of the idea, the message, of the work of art. The social ideas of many artists of the past were vague, confused and Utopian. While aware of the imperfection and injustices of one or another form of social organisation, they could not offer any integrated programme of social change in its place.

The artists of socialist realism are guided in their creative quest by a reliable compass—knowledge of the fundamental laws of social development. The Soviet artist says clearly what he is condemning or rejecting, and what he approves of and supports. This *active* stand with regard to the material embodied in art is one of the outstanding and characteristic features of Soviet art. When we examine any of its best works, we see that the clarity of the ideological position of the artist, the fact that it shows a definite tendency, does not make it dry, rationalistic or doctrinaire. On the contrary, many, if not most, of our works of art are marked by fine romantic feeling, by a soaring towards the future. It is precisely because we understand the course of events, the main-springs of social development, that our art is marked by *historical optimism*.

Another distinctive feature of the work of Soviet artists is their continual quest for the *typical* image of man or events. What does that mean? It means that in depicting some individual phenomenon that he has wrested, as it were, from the stream of life, the artist must show it in a light that reveals the most important and characteristic qualities of its inner essence. In this way it is possible for the artist to reflect the most important features of the times in events that, on the surface, may seem insignificant, and in the portrait of a single

man the qualities of mankind as a whole in the particular period. To describe the general in the particular, to embody the most important aspects of contemporary life or of some past age in a form that is emotionally actual, visual, palpable, alive—that is what we mean by achieving the typical in a work of art.

Soviet artists respect, study and creatively utilise the art of all nations and epochs. This by no means implies that they reject the value or importance of the independent traditions of different nations—on the contrary. The art of socialist realism, in whatever country or nation it develops, is always *national in form*. The idea of national form in art embraces many things : the essential and deep-rooted traditions of that nation ; the forms in which they are expressed ; its way of seeing the world (which is very hard to define, but is nevertheless very definite and distinctive) ; the subject matter peculiar to one or another country or national area ; and many other things as well. Study and utilisation of the art forms of other nations is absolutely necessary for the art of socialist realism. Without such study, without free and broad interchange and communion between the artistic traditions of different nations, successful development of the national art, of its national forms (which are not unchanging either), is inconceivable.

Thus one of the important features of Soviet art is that it combines a *multitude* of different *national forms*, united by the bond of a *realist method* of depicting reality and a common *socialist ideology*. These national forms exist happily side by side within the art of one country and mutually enrich one another.

In listing and explaining certain characteristics of the art of socialist realism, we have only given the general outlines of its development. Its development and growth are a process of continual struggle—real and sometimes very intricate struggle—between different opinions, trends and standpoints. Artists who are sincere and ardent adherents of the method of socialist realism often disagree among themselves on specific creative problems. There have been attempts to offer vulgar and primitive solutions of many important aesthetic problems. Such solutions still exist. In their everyday practice our artists have to avoid an over-simplified approach to the portrayal of contemporary life, and a disregard for the depth of the image, the expressiveness of the form. The works that suffer from such faults are subjected to severe criticism by art critics, the public, and artists themselves. That is a very convincing form of criticism. Disputes are the unfailing concomitants of our artistic life ; the free exchange of opinions, of conflicting points of view, is the salt in its bread.

Socialist realism permits, and in fact *imperatively demands*, an infinite variety of creative personalities, trends, genres, manners, methods, approaches to style and form. The fact that the ideological position of Soviet artists is fundamentally the same, that the philosophical basis of their art is as one, does not result in standardisation of the product, in the negation of the creative personality of the individual artist, as some of our western critics seem to think. To convince them of the untruth of that sort of accusation only one thing is needed : that they give up their preconceived notions and acquaint themselves more closely with the actual creative work of Soviet artists.

If we were asked which genre is advancing most successfully in the Soviet fine arts, we should be hard put to it to give a decisive answer. Genres are developing along parallel lines, in close collaboration, and each can point to its own specific achievements.

Soviet portrait painting, sculpture and the graphic arts have very rich traditions. The humanist message of Soviet art has received its fullest and most varied expression in portraiture. One of the finest Soviet portrait painters was Mikhail Nesterov, killed during the war. Nesterov's portraits glorify man's creative drive, the will to change life. The beauty of the spirit of tireless and eternal search lives in his portrait of the famous physiologist Ivan Pavlov.

Pavlov's face expresses the power of his convictions, his faith in the truth and iron logic of the scientific premises he set forth.

The creative work of Pavel Korin, a master of the portrait, the monumental fresco and mosaic work, developed under Nesterov's direct influence. His portraits are usually restrained and cold in their colours, marked by precise and even sharp contours, and by the severe rhythmic structure of his composition. For his models Korin usually selects people who are out of the ordinary, who live intense and restless creative lives. He has breathed almost gigantic strength into his picture of the Russian sculptor Sergei Konenkov. This portrait of the old man, with delicate and sensitive hands, deep-set, piercing eyes, and a face beautiful with inspiration and an almost fanatical creative fire, is not only a close and expressive likeness of Sergei Konenkov, but, in a way, also characterises his art. Konenkov's work, which is extremely individual, has at the same time a distinct national flavour. From his studio has come the series of "old men of the forest", queer, sly creatures that look like both the Pan of ancient mythology and the characters of Russian folk-lore. Then, side by side with his intricate and knotty compositions in wood (all the "old men" are in wood), Konenkov has lovely, pure, singing nudes, done in marble, that embody the modern ideal of female beauty.

In the last ten years Konenkov, who recently celebrated his eightieth birthday, has turned more frequently to the sculptured portrait. Sometimes he models his contemporaries, but more often he turns to imaginary or historical subjects. Such are his Charles Darwin, Gorky, Chaliapin, Dostoyevsky and other busts. Related to the same series is his latest work, a bust of Moussorgsky.

Sincerity in the portrayal of man is a valuable quality. It goes to explain the sculptured portraits of Sarra Lebedeva, in which fresh and spontaneous poetic feeling is combined with great depth of psychological characterisation. In her bust of the poet Alexander Tvardovsky, done towards the end of the war, she seems to have caught a fleeting moment in the poet's life. In her treatment there clearly emerges a definite character which is drawn convincingly and with great psychological insight.

We know from experience that the same result can also be achieved by entirely different methods. Unlike the finely delineated sculptures of Sarra Lebedeva, with their many and varied shades of feeling, Nikolai Tomsy uses sharp and clearly drawn lines. He does not try to catch and portray the "beautiful moment" in the life of the individual and through that moment reveal the whole man. He usually gives the most characteristic expression of his subject, directly related to the latter's spiritual, moral and ideological make-up. That was his approach to the bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Pokryshev. But the character of the man and his inner world is just as convincingly and fully revealed as in Lebedeva's work.

This interest in man also characterises our genre painting. The genre or domestic picture has always been given much attention in Soviet art, but its development has been particularly noticeable in recent years. This is clearly because no other form of painting can show us everyday life in all its truth and unembellished simplicity, in all its manifold variety, as fully as the domestic painting does. It is precisely in this form that the artist has the greatest opportunities to pose and solve topical questions of ethical behaviour and mutual relations in the collective of workers and in the family.

The work of Sergei Grigoryev is very representative of Soviet genre painting. Grigoryev has deep insight into the psychology of the child, and in his paintings we often see small children and adolescents, members of the youngest generation of Soviet citizens. Some of his canvases deal wholly with the school and its pupils.

Other genre paintings by Soviet artists are lyrical in their emotional tone—as, for instance, the works of two young artists, Vladimir Gavrilov's *Young*

Prospectors and Shilnikov's *Students*. They began to exhibit only recently. Then there is *Homecoming*, a painting by the Ukrainian Vladimir Kostetsky, which portrays the feelings of a Soviet soldier and his wife when reunited after the war.

Soviet genre painting does not necessarily have a pointed subject, a "literary" plot. It is often treated in a manner entirely intrinsic to painting. For example, take the painting *New Moscow* by Yury Pimenov. Pimenov is a master of the urban scene. He shows us the swift tempo of the city, its streets, shops, railway stations and suburban highways, the energy of daily life and its active poetry.

Sometimes genre painting proves to be an original combination of a portrait and a landscape. This applies to Semyon Chuikov's *Daughter of Soviet Kirgizia*, for example. A Russian, Chuikov was born and has spent most of working life in the Kirgiz Republic, and has developed close ties with its people, its scenery and its traditions. His cycles of paintings on Kirgiz themes are not superficial sketches by a tourist charmed by the exotic landscapes of the east and its customs, but serious and profound delineations of a life he loves and knows down to its minutest details.

Landscape painting is one of the most highly developed branches of Soviet art. There are many local differences and trends in our landscapes. Some attempt to offer philosophical genre realisations of our ideas of the world; others are lyrical on a deeply subjective plane; others again show the quest for decorative qualities, usually connected, it should be said, with the solution of definite pictorial problems. It is precisely the landscape painting, a genre far removed from interest in the "literary" subject matter, which shows best of all how strongly and organically Soviet artists link the "what" with the "how" of their work.

Take Sergei Gerasimov's *April*. He is one of our virtuosos in the use of colour. In this canvas he has achieved truly polyphonic colour effects. It is based on the most subtle transitions of light blue, brown, yellow and rose. But the different shades, the nuances of colour so precisely juxtaposed, are not an end in themselves. With their aid Gerasimov achieves an integrated, poetic representation of the first awakening of nature, of the quiet, peaceful but already irresistible coming of spring.

The modest and quiet beauty of the nature of Central Russia, which is most often the subject of Sergei Gerasimov's painting, appears at exhibitions beside pictures extolling the vivid landscape of the Soviet East, with its positively glaring contrasts, the landscapes of Martiros Saryan, the dean of modern Armenian painting. Saryan's landscapes, with their carpet-like intricacy of colour and design and their large, sometimes almost continuous, areas of colour, appear to be purely decorative in their inner purpose; but this is a mistaken impression and occurs only to those who have never visited the artist's homeland. He shows us Armenia's warm colours and their infinite shades in the rays of the afternoon sun, not only with great skill and conviction, but also very precisely, with the confidence that comes only from long and devoted study of one's native scene. This is true not only of the old works of this seventy-four-year-old master, but also of his most recent canvases, among them *The Valley of Ararat* and *Noon*.

A place of honour in the Russian classical heritage belongs to the historical painting. This genre has also been developed in the Soviet period. However, the word "historical" does not necessarily imply excursions to the remote centuries. If the artist is able to show us some very important event in a true light, even an event of recent occurrence, there is no reason why we should refuse to recognise it as an illuminating and convincing interpretation of one of the pages of history. The most important attribute of a historical painting is not the date of the scene the artist is depicting, but how deeply and fully he reveals in it the moving forces of history, the most important conflicts and

characteristic features of the age. What we mean by a historical painting is not a full-dress display or picture for a history book, but a work that elucidates the essence of the historical event in question with the help of the imaginative language of art.

Some of Boris Yohanson's canvases measure up to the highest demands that can be made of historical painting. His *At An Old Urals Works* has been accorded wide recognition. The basic psychological nexus of the picture lies in the way the eyes of the manufacturer, as he whispers into the ear of his toady, clash with those of the worker seated beside the hot furnace. In this silent clash the artist personified the main forces of nineteenth-century Russia.

Many other instances of the successful treatment of historical subjects could be given. It must be admitted, however, that it is in the historical genre that our art has encountered perhaps the greatest difficulties. Certain artists have yielded to the temptation to portray history superficially and in the manner of the illustration; others have confined themselves to the portrayal of the activity of outstanding individuals and forgotten that the people are the main and decisive force in history, its real makers. Here it is useful again and again to remember the traditions of classical realism. The paintings of the nineteenth-century Russian painter Vasili Surikov derive their greatest value and importance from the very fact that individual characters appear in them as *typical figures of history*, whose activity can be understood and positively appraised only when directly linked with the broad popular movement of the era in question.

So far we have discussed only easel paintings and sculpture. But there is another field to which Soviet artists have been applying themselves—that of monumental art. It includes the works of a complex nature in which sculptor and painter collaborate with architect, contributing plafonds, frescoes, mosaics, bas-reliefs and statues for new public buildings and dwelling houses. It also includes the monuments that are erected in large numbers every year.

One of the most talented masters of the monumental form before the war was the late Ivan Shadr. He was the author of one of the first monuments to Vladimir Lenin, which stands over the dam of a hydro-electric station in the trans-Caucasus. He also did the Gorky monument in Moscow, which was completed after his death by Vera Mukhina. This monument shows us Gorky in the Soviet period, a wide and mature master of literature, a great thinker and humanist. It is pleasing to look at. Its clear silhouette impresses itself immediately on the mind; its spatial treatment is good. It combines the spontaneity of the genre figure with the grandeur of the memorial monument.

Unquestionably the best and truly classical achievement of Soviet monumental sculpture is Vera Mukhina's famous group *The Worker and Collective Farm Woman*, completed in 1937. This group, which originally adorned the Soviet Pavilion at the International Fair in Paris, is executed in stainless steel. Its height from base to summit is seventy-nine feet. Both figures, the young worker and the young collective farm woman, strain forward in taut, vigorous movement. This gesture gives one the impression that they are winged. The statue expresses qualities that are characteristic of our society and our people: great creative will, joyous affirmation of the present, and striving for an even better future.

All our art, like Mukhina's sculpture, calls the peoples to freedom, unity, peace. Our road is not an easy one; we seek, we experiment and sometimes we make mistakes. But great art was always born in travail. The harder the road to the beautiful, the more sacred and precious that road is. For us the beautiful is life itself, is the struggle for the free and untrammelled development of the creative powers of man, is the truth. Was it not Shakespeare who said:

“Oh, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!”

PLANNING LOCAL AGRICULTURE

M. Krutkin

One of the problems that interest students of Soviet planning is how local planning bodies function, and compile the local plans that are built up into the annual plans of the USSR. In this article the economist of the District Planning Commission of the Krasno-Bakovsk District of Gorky Region reviews the experience of his Commission in planning local agriculture. Its publication will, we hope, fill a gap in the literature available on Soviet planning.

OUR district has twenty-eight collective farms and two machine and tractor stations (MTS). The total area of the collective farms is 135,707 acres, including 65,996 acres of arable and 17,828 acres of grassland. The area sown to crops this year (1954) is 48,585 acres, which includes 31,245 acres of spring wheat.

Considering the need to raise the standard of planning local agriculture, the Executive Committee of the District Soviet took measures to improve the composition of the District Planning Commission and to get the most active and qualified specialists on to it. The District Planning Commission is made up of two agronomists, a stock breeder, a forester, a teacher and a doctor. The working staff of the Planning Commission now consists of four people.

Following the new instructions for district planning commissions, each member now has certain duties assigned to him. A plan for the Commission's work is drawn up every quarter, is approved by the Executive Committee of the District Soviet, and then submitted to the Regional Planning Commission.

The Commission's plan of work for agricultural planning includes the following :

(a) An all-round study of the district's agriculture ; a study of the economic and natural conditions of each collective farm and of the MTS zones ; an analysis of the dynamics of livestock herds and their productivity according to collective farms and MTS zones ; generalisation of the experience of the advanced workers in agricultural production.

(b) The preparation of a draft plan for developing agriculture ; discussion of the draft plan by the Executive Committee of the District Soviet and by regional organisations.

(c) After its approval by the Regional Executive Committee, submission of the plan to the MTS's.

(d) The working out of measures to ensure fulfilment of plans ; daily check on the carrying out of the plans.

(e) All-round utilisation of local resources and co-ordination of the work plans of local enterprises in order to render the requisite help to agriculture.

The planning of agriculture must be based on a deep study of collective farms and MTS zones, and on bringing to light reserves that would facilitate the development of farming and stockbreeding.

When drawing up the draft plan for 1954 and working out the final plan for agricultural work in the district, the Planning Commission made a detailed study of the 1953 harvest results of the collective farms. During a check-up it was established that the management of the Shemanikhinsk MTS had made very serious mistakes when it reported the size of the harvest. For example, the yield of flax and oats was shown as twice or three times the actual yield, and the sown areas were calculated incorrectly. As the 1953 data were the

base figures for the 1954 plan this could have led to serious mistakes. On the instructions of the District Soviet Executive Committee, measures were taken to correct the data of the report. It should be noted that before the District Planning Commission made the check-up the Shemanikhinsk MTS report had been approved by the Regional Land Department, which did not discover the mistakes. This fact clearly shows that bureaucratic office methods and paper work cannot be a substitute for living, practical work on the spot, as happened in this case.

The Planning Commission checked up on how the MTS's were carrying out their job on the collective farms, and on the order and quality of the work in the plans. In doing so a number of important deficiencies were discovered. On the Zhdanov Collective Farm, for example, no plan had been drawn up for the electrification and mechanisation of the stock farms. When the plan for new building was drawn up no provision had been made for the production of bricks. Nor had the annual financial plan been correctly drafted. Omissions were also discovered on other collective farms. Through the Executive Committee of the District Soviet, the MTS managements were given instructions on how to improve the organisation of planned work on the collective farms.

It must be noted that until 1953 the state of crop rotation in the district was unsatisfactory. Only three of the twenty-eight collective farms introduced and mastered a correct crop rotation. Bearing in mind that correct crop rotations ensure a systematic increase of soil fertility and create the necessary conditions for increasing yields and creating a stable fodder base for stock raising, measures were taken to improve the crop rotations. With the aid of the Regional Agricultural Department work was carried out on all the collective farms of the district on land distribution, establishment of boundaries, putting their documentation in order, and drawing up transition tables and agronomic surveys. The materials on each collective farm were reviewed by the Executive Committee of the District Soviet. This year all the collective farms in the district are introducing correct crop rotations, with a view to completing them in 1956. The job of the Planning Commission is to ensure control over the distribution of different crops in accordance with the plan, and to bring about a correct crop rotation.

Other measures respecting agricultural practice have also been worked out with the workers of the MTS's and collective farms. Calculations have been made of the stocks of manure and its transport to the collective farm fields. Whereas 41,100 tons were carted out in 1953, the plan adopted for 1954 envisaged 70,000 tons. The application of mineral fertilisers was increased 3.5 times, and the collection of local fertilisers (wood ashes, chicken manure) was trebled. Time limits for the application of manure were fixed. A plan was drafted for the application of additional fertilisers to 7,410 acres of winter crops (in 1953 the figure was 4,940 acres). The harrowing of winter crops was increased 2.5 times.

Measures were worked out for the preparation of land for spring crops. It had been planned to autumn plough the whole area under spring crops, as this makes it possible to preserve autumn and spring moisture in the soil, destroy weeds and agricultural pests, and carry out spring sowing earlier in the year, which undoubtedly leads to an increase of yield. A plan was drawn up for an expansion of clean fallows and for their cultivation. The sowing of grain crops with vernalised seed is to increase eightfold this year.

Special attention was paid to the planting and cultivation of potatoes. Where last year the square-cluster method of planting potatoes was applied only on the "New Path" Farm on an area of twenty-five acres, this method of planting has been used this year on all the collective farms. 1,800 acres out of a plan of 2,717 were planted by the square-cluster method. Other measures, too, were worked out: in particular time tables were set for tilling the arable land, sowing, harvesting, etc. What is more, these measures were worked out

according to the MTS zones, taking into account the actual conditions of the collective farms, their crops and the yields achieved. What each collective farm could and must do by its own forces and resources, and what the MTS's were to do, was also determined.

Much attention was paid to improving the work of the MTS's. The following measures were outlined for the Krasno-Bakovsk and Shemanikhinsk MTS's: in the first place, to carry out a timely and thorough overhaul of the tractors, seed drills, combine harvesters and other agricultural machinery and ensure their dispatch to the collective farms before the commencement of field work; to achieve 100 per cent employment of all MTS machinery, its more effective use and an increase in its productivity. Calculations had shown that the volume of MTS work for 1954 could be greatly increased and its quality improved with the existing number of tractors and machinery. Thus the plan for tractor work for the Krasno-Bakovsk MTS has been fixed, in terms of soft ploughing, at 108,680 acres against 83,239 acres in 1953; and the volume of work per tractor has been raised from 810 acres to 948 acres. The annual plan for the Shemanikhinsk MTS was set at 61,850 acres as against 35,568 acres last year, and the amount of work to be done per 15 h.p. tractor was raised from 697 acres to 946 acres.

The MTS's have carried out a more careful selection of staff, and measures have been taken to raise their skill by organising study courses. During the winter seventy-five people followed courses at the Krasno-Bakovsk MTS and sixty people at the Shemanikhinsk. The majority of them studied without interrupting their work. The Party District Committee and the MTS Party and trade union organisations carried out much political and mass work among the MTS workers, and organised socialist competition for the fulfilment of the plans set.

To extend electrification of the collective farms and mechanisation of those jobs that absorb much labour, the Planning Commission studied the power resources of the district and the position with regard to electricity output at industrial enterprises and the hydro-electric stations. It established that the Kirilovskaya Hydro-electric Station can electrify the Gorky and the "Red Beacon" Collective Farms, in addition to the collective farms already electrified. Measures are now being taken to electrify both farms this year.

A supplementary plan for laying on telephones at the collective farms was worked out jointly with the District Communications Office, and has now been completed. A plan for supplying a number of collective farms with radio relay and public address systems was drafted and is being carried out. The Planning Commission must, and will, give more attention to this work.

Together with MTS and forestry workers the District Planning Committee undertook a survey of the supplementary requirements for land for pasturing socially owned cattle in the forests of the state preserves, and discovered possibilities for meeting the needs of the collective farms. As a result the "Timiryazev", "Voroshilov", "United" and other collective farms have obtained pastures, which is of the greatest importance for extending stock raising in the district.

Among the measures taken to extend stock breeding, new construction and the overhaul of livestock buildings have an important role. The bottleneck in building is bricks, production of which is not sufficient, even though there are ample sources of clay in the district. The Planning Commission, the MTS's, and the Department of Rural and Collective Farm Building worked out measures for the production of bricks in the district by the local industries and collective farms. Plans have been submitted to the producers, and a number of enterprises and collective farms have now begun production of bricks.

Local industries and producer co-operatives have also undertaken additional quotas for the production of agricultural implements, carts, sleighs, and other items needed by the collective farms. The "Builder" Co-operative has under-

taken to produce fodder cookers for the collective farm stock farms, and frames for their hotbeds.

Measures were worked out jointly with the trading organisations to open new shops at the collective farms and MTS's. Salesmen's routes to settlements where there are no shops and direct to tractor drivers and collective farmers in the fields have been reorganised and time tables fixed.

Definite measures were worked out for industrial enterprises and organisations in the district to become patrons of collective farms. These measures have been approved by the District Committee of the CPSU and the Executive Committee of the District Soviet. Every enterprise and organisation has assumed definitive obligations to render the collective farms technical and other assistance.

Many patrons—the “Builder” Co-operative, the Vetluzhsky Wood Chemical Combine and others—are successfully carrying out the obligations they assumed.

The Planning Commission has been given the job of drawing general conclusions from reports on the carrying out of agricultural work by the MTS's and collective farms of the district. Through the MTS's the Planning Commission receives reports on the progress of the work, draws general conclusions from them, analyses them and submits them to the Executive of the District Soviet. To check the correctness of some of the reports received, members of the Planning Commission periodically visit the collective farms and compare the data received through the MTS's with the reports of the same date available at the collective farms.

Correctly formulated reports, and visits on the spot, make it possible for district organisations to get a clear picture of the progress of work at the MTS's and collective farms, to discover mistakes and shortcomings, and at the same time to take measures to correct them.

The Planning Commission is paying great attention to checking the carrying out of plans. A check-up gives positive results only when it is of a concrete and operative character. This year the members of the Planning Commission twice took part in a check-up on the way the plan for overhauling the tractor park was being carried out by the MTS's. It was established that, though the overhaul was better organised than last year, there were, however, essential weaknesses. The results of the check-up were submitted for discussion to the Executive Committee of the District Soviet and the Bureau of the Party District Committee, discussed with the tractor drivers, and commented on in the district and regional press. The overhaul was completed satisfactorily and in good time.

A check was made on the existence of seed stocks on the collective farms and their suitability for sowing. A shortage of seed for several crops (flax, oats, potatoes) was revealed in a number of collective farms and the district as a whole, as was the fact that they were not in condition. On the basis of the check-up the district organisations instructed the managements of the collective farms and MTS's to take steps to make good the shortage of seed, and get it up to the prescribed condition.

A check was also made on the stocks of manure and mineral fertilisers on the collective farms. It was established that individual collective farms, the “Krupskaya”, “Kuibyshev”, and others, had hardly bothered about stocking fertilisers. The Planning Commission submitted this question to the Executive Committee of the District Soviet for discussion. As a result, steps were taken to intensify the collection of manure and the delivery of mineral fertilisers. School children and patron organisations were of considerable help to the collective farms in this matter. However, in carrying out this measure the collective farms were late, and did not pay proper attention to it; consequently the plan for procuring and transporting fertilisers was not fulfilled.

The Planning Commission also organised a check on the fulfilment by

industrial enterprises and producer co-operatives of the quotas for producing agricultural implements and other goods required by the collective farms. This check was made by visiting the collective farms, machine and tractor stations, and other organisations, as well as by receiving and analysing the prescribed reports.

Of late the compilation of land and fodder balances, manpower balances and building material balances has assumed great practical importance in the work of the Planning Commission. For 1954 it compiled the following balances : land, fodder fuel, building materials and manpower.

On the basis of labour balances compiled according to collective farms, the Planning Commission and the MTS specialists drew up a composite labour balance for the district for 1954 which was submitted as follows :

						No. of people	
						<i>For the year</i>	<i>For the period of maximum intensity of work (3rd quarter)</i>
I.	Manpower available for work on collective farms					7190	7750
II.	Demand for labour power						
	(a)	for field work	...	...	...	4200	5800
	(b)	in stock raising	...	...	...	2050	2050
	(c)	for building and transport	...	...	...	250	250
	(d)	for subsidiary enterprises	...	...	...	150	100
	(e)	for administrative personnel	...	...	...	310	310
	Total	...	...	...	...	6960	8510
	Surplus	...	...	...	...	230	—
	Deficit	...	...	...	...	—	760

The surplus of manpower during the winter season is absorbed in industry and lumbering, and in the spring on floating timber. The manpower shortage in the third quarter (during the harvest) is being made up in this year by increased mechanisation of several agricultural processes on the collective farms.

The district lags very much behind in the development of its socialised stock raising. One reason is the shortage of fodder. Measures to provide fodder are of decisive importance for the livestock plan. As the basis for a plan to ensure fodder, particularly in the period of stall feeding, a balance was drawn up for coarse and succulent fodder. To calculate fodder requirements stock was divided according to species and age groups. The following feed norms (in cwts. per head) were adopted for the period of stall feeding (October 15 to May 1954).

	Coarse fodder	Succulent feed
Horses ...	68	15.5
Cows ...	47	108
Bulls ...	51	18
Followers (under one year) ...	19.5	10
Followers (over one year) ...	29.5	18
Sows ...	9	127
Sheep ...	8	4

A balance was drawn up separately for each collective farm, and then compiled for the district as a whole.

The provision of fodder varied from farm to farm. Whereas nine of the twenty-eight collective farms were fully provided with coarse fodder, not one was fully supplied with succulent feed. This caused serious concern. The necessary steps were taken, and measures were drafted to expand the fodder base in 1954.

The task of an accelerated development of agriculture set by the Party and

the Government requires increased construction of farm buildings, stock barns, and other buildings. This increases the need for building materials. In spite of a considerable growth in production and the possession of raw material resources, the district is still experiencing a shortage of such building materials as boards, bricks and lime. Their production lags behind the district's growing needs. In 1953, for example, demand for red bricks was estimated at 1,200,000, while local industry provided only 1,000,000. Sixty-five tons of lime were needed but only twenty tons were produced.

The Planning Commission asked in good time for information and orders from the building organisations and collective farms concerning the number of building projects and the quantity of building materials needed, and checked their actual requirements. The possibility of producing bricks, boards and other building materials in local industrial enterprises, producer co-operatives and collective farms was determined. After all calculations had been made, the following balance of basic building materials was drawn up :

	Bricks (thousands)	Boards (cubic metres)	Rough Timber (cubic metres)	Lime (tons)
I. Production				
District Industrial Combine	100	1000	2500	—
Producer Co-operatives	100	1500	5000	20
Regional Fuel Department Sawmill	—	12500	—	—
State Forest	—	—	1500	—
Wood Chemical Combine	800	—	—	—
Subsidiary enterprises of collective farms	100	—	6500	—
Total	1100	15000	15000	20
II. Demand				
Collective farm building	200	1000	6500	30
District social and cultural building	250	1500	1800	15
Housing	50	1250	2000	20
Industry	700	13500	3000	—
Total	1200	17250	13300	65
Surplus	—	—	1700	—
Deficit	100	2250	—	45

Thus a shortage of bricks, sawn timber and lime was brought to light. The Planning Commission worked out measures to increase output of bricks and other building materials in the district, and submitted this question for discussion by the Executive Committee of the District Soviet. Local industrial enterprises and producer co-operatives were given additional quotas, while the collective farms were advised to organise production of building materials on their subsidiary enterprises.

It must be noted that the district is far from utilising existing possibilities for producing building materials and reducing their cost. For example, the "Udarnik" sawmill has a mechanised plant capable of producing 8,000 bricks per shift, but owing to a shortage of electric power the plant is idle and bricks are produced by manual labour.

Huge quantities of clinker have accumulated at Vetluzhsky railway station. Nearby are beds of clay. It is quite feasible to organise production of clinker blocks. A large share of the blame for the lack of progress on this important measure falls on the District Planning Commission.

There are a number of important shortcomings in the work of the Planning Commission. The experience of advanced collective farms, brigades, stock farms and individual collective farmers and MTS tractor drivers has not been

studied sufficiently. An important side of the work of the District Planning Commission must be the generalisation of the advanced methods and achievements of collective farms, collective farmers and tractor drivers, and wide dissemination of this experience.

The assistance given the District Planning Commission by the Regional Planning Commission and the State Planning Commission of the RSFSR must be strengthened. In particular, publication of the bulletin should be resumed. It should contain advice on problems of planning, and should organise exchange of experience. Seminars or conferences of the economists of district planning commissions should be held, textbooks on planning the local economy of districts should be issued, and the publication of popular books on planning the various branches of the economy, on accountancy, and for exchange of experience should also be organised. It is also desirable that the journal *Planned Economy* should deal more frequently with problems of planning local economy.

—Translated from *PLANOVOYE KHOZYAISTVO* [*Planned Economy*], 1954, No. 5, by I.N. and H.C.C. Abridged.

Problems of Soviet Agriculture

Academician N. Tsitsin

AGAINST STEREOTYPED METHODS

T. S. Maltsev

THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM

AND REPORT ON AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCES

ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL

Vol. XV, No. 3 : Autumn 1954

SCR NOTES

Soviet Artists and Scientists in Britain



November - December 1954



IT WAS with very great pleasure that the SCR greeted the arrival in Britain, early in November, of one of the most distinguished groups of Soviet visitors that have ever come to this country. The thirteen members of the party whose programme was arranged by the SCR were :

ACADEMICIAN Y. A. AMBARTSUMYAN. Astrophysicist. President of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Republic. Vice-President of the International Astronomical Union.

ACADEMICIAN M. M. DUBININ. Physical chemist. Stalin Prize winner 1942 and 1950. Director, Sorbic Processes Laboratory, Institute of Physical Chemistry, USSR Academy of Sciences. Academic Secretary to Department of Chemical Sciences, USSR Academy of Sciences.

PEOPLE'S ARTIST OF THE USSR ARAM KHACHATURYAN. Composer and conductor. Four times Stalin Prize winner. Order of Red Banner. Order of Lenin. Professor, the Conservatoire, Moscow. Composer of *Gayaneh* and *Spartacus* ballet music and *Battle of Stalingrad* film music.

PEOPLE'S ARTIST OF THE USSR DAVID OISTRAKH. Violinist. First prize winner in Ukrainian, USSR, Polish and Belgian contests 1930-37. Stalin Prize winner 1942. Professor, Chaikovsky Conservatoire, Moscow. Accompanied by V. YAMPOLSKY, pianist.

THE KOMITAS STATE STRING QUARTET of the Armenian Republic : A. TER-GAVRILYAN, violin ; R. R. DAVIDYAN, violin ; G. S. TALALYAN, viola ; S. Z. AZLAMAZYAN, violoncello.

NOVELIST AND PLAYWRIGHT LEONID LEONOV. Author of *The Apple Orchards of Polovchansk* : *The Badgers* : *The Russian Forest*, etc.

GRAPHIC ARTIST DEMENTY SHMARINOV.* Illustrator of Dostoevsky, Gorky, Nekrasov, Alexei Tolstoy, Lev Tolstoy, etc.

"VOKS" REPRESENTATIVES V. G. YAKOVLEV† (Vice-President) and K. A. PEREVOSHCHIKOV (Head of British Section).

OUR visitors undertook a crowded and strenuous programme of lectures and platform appearances, of which a résumé is given below (all on SCR premises unless otherwise stated), as well as innumerable private and professional visits, several press conferences and many days of recording for gramophone companies.

November

4th : **Prof. Ambartsumyan and Prof. Dubinin.** Question and answer meeting on Soviet Scientists and Scientific Research.

5th : **Mr. Leonov.** Question and answer meeting on Soviet Literature 1934-54.

7th : **Mr. Khachaturyan.** Orchestral concert. *B.B.C.*

9th : **Prof. Dubinin.** Lecture. *University of Southampton.*

* See *The Soviet Fine Arts*, page 29.

† See *International Cultural Relations of the Soviet People*, page 17.

- 10th : **Prof. Ambartsumyan**, Lecture. *University of London*.
Mr. Oistrakh, Solo concert. *Royal Albert Hall*.
 11th : **Prof. Ambartsumyan**, Lecture. *University of London*.
 12th : **Komitas String Quartet**, Recital.
 13th : **Mr. Khachaturyan**, Question and answer meeting on Soviet Musicians. *Rudolf Steiner Theatre*.
 15th : **Mr. Leonov**, Chekhov Evening. *Arts Theatre Club*.
Mr. Oistrakh, Solo Concert. *Free Trade Hall, Manchester*.
 16th : **Prof. Ambartsumyan**, Lecture. *University of St. Andrews*.
 17th : **Mr. Khachaturyan**, Question and answer meeting on Soviet Music. *Institute of Contemporary Arts*.
 19th : **Mr. Oistrakh**, Solo concert. *Albert Hall, Nottingham*.
 20th : **Mr. Shmarinov**, Question and answer meeting on Soviet Art.
 21st : **Mr. Khachaturyan**, Orchestral concert. *Hallé Orchestra, Manchester*.
 23rd : **Prof. Dubinin**, Question and answer meeting on Soviet Science. *Rudolf Steiner Theatre*.
 25th : **Mr. Khachaturyan and Mr. Oistrakh**, Orchestral concert. *Royal Albert Hall*.
 28th : **All Soviet guests**, SCR thirtieth anniversary celebration. *Hammersmith Town Hall*.
 29th : **Mr. Yakolev**, Lecture.

December

- 2nd : **Komitas String Quartet**, Recital. *Wigmore Hall*.
 3rd : **Mr. Khachaturyan**, Recital (*Spartacus*).
Mr. Oistrakh, Orchestral concert. *Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool*.
 5th : **Mr. Khachaturyan**, Orchestral concert. Solo piano : Moura Lympany. *Royal Albert Hall*.
 6th : **Mr. Oistrakh**, Orchestral concert. *Royal Albert Hall*.

In all, one or more members of the group visited Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Chichester, Edinburgh, Halifax, Haworth, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Macclesfield, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Nottingham, St. Andrews, Sheffield, Southampton, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick and York.

Soviet Medical Specialists

ON December 3 there arrived in Britain a party of twelve Soviet doctors, led by Professor A. N. Shabanov, Senior Physician at the Botkin Hospital, Moscow. Their visit to this country was at the invitation of the SCR Medical Section (which in September had arranged the visit to the USSR of nineteen British doctors as the guests of the Soviet Ministry of Health). During their three-week stay, the Soviet medical specialists completed the following comprehensive programme.

Professional visits

(In chronological order)

London area : Tottenham (Borough Council), Royal Free Hospital, Potters Bar Cottage Hospital, Mount Grace Comprehensive Secondary School, Institute of Postgraduate Medical Studies (Hammersmith), County Hall, Royal College of Surgeons, Maudsley Hospital, Harefield Hospital (Northwood), Harlow New Town, University College Hospital, Medical Research Council, Central Middlesex Hospital, Belmont Psychiatric Hospital, Royal Orthopaedic Hospital (Stanmore), St. James Hospital (Balham), Springfield Hospital (Tooting), British Medical Association, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Cambridge : Papworth Village Settlement.

Birmingham : Dudley Road Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham Resident Hospital.

Manchester area : Manchester Royal Infirmary, Department of Rheumatology (Buxton Spa), St. Mary's Hospital, University Faculty of Medicine, Booth Hall Hospital, Department of Orthopaedics (Liverpool), coal mine, Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic, Department of Social Medicine, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Derbishire House, Town Hall (Lord Mayor's lunch), Wythenshawe Housing Estate, British Medical Association.

Non-professional visits and excursions

Ice show (Empress Hall), Macbeth (Old Vic), House of Commons, National Gallery, coach tour (Oxford), Terry McGlynn Studios (Manchester), *Manchester Guardian* offices (Manchester), Hallé Concert (Manchester).

Book Reviews

GOLDEN AGE OF THE RUSSIAN NOVEL

Turgenev, A Life. David Magarshack. (Faber and Faber, 1954, pp. 328, 25/-.)

Turgenev v russkoy kritike. (Moscow, 1953, pp. 575.)

Oblomov. Goncharov. A new translation by David Magarshack. (Penguin Classics, 1954, pp. 485, 3/6.)

Anna Karenin. Leo Tolstoy. A new translation by Rosemary Edmonds. (Penguin Classics, 1954, pp. 853, 5/-.)

THE two novels now added to the Penguin Classics—*Oblomov* and *Anna Karenin* (as she is here called in English form)—are much ampler than any single work by Turgenev. No English novel has quite the scope of *Anna Karenina*, not even the rightly admired *Middlemarch*; and Turgenev never attained to a picture of society with such depth and range. *Oblomov*, the monument of a writer far less gifted than Turgenev, created a compelling symbol in the heroically indolent Ilya Ilyich which is even more potent than Bazarov. And yet, though in these ways outclassed by Goncharov and Tolstoy, Turgenev still has his place right in the centre of any account of Russian fiction. He carried forward the tradition that starts with Pushkin, the tradition of humane feeling and controlled form to which Chekhov also belongs, and which contributed a good deal to the ethos of Tolstoy, for all his neglect of formal beauties. Turgenev certainly caught the attention of Russian critics, from Belinsky, who recognised his adherence to fact, his truthfulness, and Dobrolyubov and Pisarev, who both valued him for his unrivalled sense of the living moment. He has indeed occasioned more good writing than any of the Russian novelists, and the new volume, *Turgenev in Russian Criticism*, with its wide selection of essays and careful notes, will be very useful to anyone studying the development of the Russian novel and its social resonances. Turgenev, the sensitive chronicler of a rich and diversified epoch, is a crucial figure in the history of not only the Russian but the European novel. His friendship with Flaubert is, of course, celebrated. He knew George Sand, he was much liked and respected by Henry James, and George Eliot said of him that she had never met any literary man whose society she enjoyed so thoroughly and so unrestrainedly.

A new biography of Turgenev is therefore of great interest. Mr. Magarshack comes to it with the experience of having written on Chekhov and Stanislavsky. In

recent years he has put out an astonishing quantity of work, both in biography and in the form of translation, and the English reader can always count on him for accuracy and wide knowledge. By no means all the middlemen who present Russian literature to the English public are really qualified to do so. There is unfortunately no driving test to prove that a person is fit to take out a masterpiece on to the dusty highroad of translation or through the byways of criticism. A new translation or a work of criticism or biography is welcomed for its scarcity value; there is little care taken of the author's credentials. Mr. Magarshack is one of a not very large band who are forcing us to demand the same kind of scrupulous presentation from works to do with Russian literature as we should naturally look for in those dealing for example with French literature. Indeed, one may guess that the day of the reckless amateur is drawing to its long close. Writers who venture upon Russian topics are now expected to know the language, and when they discuss Russian literature to have read it thoroughly in the original.

It is therefore disappointing to have to record that in several rather important respects this biography is not all that it should be. The reader will find here the merits that are generally acknowledged in Mr. Magarshack's work—that is to say, he will recognise the integrity, the good literary conscience, and the industry of the author. Anything that is said about Turgenev will have its basis in fact: the records may be trusted. But the real significance of a biography depends on the point of view from which it is written, and here one wants to quarrel with Mr. Magarshack. Like too many biographers today—I have in mind particularly biographers who write on nineteenth-century novelists—he limits himself to the personal, the intimate side of his subject's life. Accordingly in this account of Turgenev we meet a gifted person who did indeed write books, to which frequent reference is made, but who had a most piquant private life. The unhappy son of a difficult mother, the abject slave of an opera singer who later lost her voice, the victim (for he was generally the victim) of numerous quarrels with other literary men—such is the Turgenev who principally emerges from Mr. Magarshack's pages. A charming, sincere, often misunderstood man—and essentially a private individual. The wider setting is sometimes indicated, but always as it were in passing. Mr. Magarshack sees every episode too readily in its domestic aspect—as the injured Turgenev might have seen it, not as the historian

should. The disagreement with Dobrolybov he rightly calls one of the greatest literary sensations of the day, but the issues at stake are rather sketchily explained. Far more could be made of this critical point in Turgenev's career. Little is done to "place" such works as *Fathers and Children* and *Virgin Soil*. Yet the biographer of a novelist must see the work as something more fundamental than a cause of personal annoyance and frictions.

Similarly, Mr. Magarshack often confines himself to indicating how a given work reflects Turgenev's own difficulties. Thus, *A Month in the Country* is cited as evidence of Turgenev's relations with Pauline Viardot. That is legitimate, but it hardly suffices as the only kind of comment on a distinguished play. One is led to feel that Mr. Magarshack, for all his understanding of the Russian language and Russian manners, has not really penetrated into the heart of his subject. He has no inwardness with it; no ultimate grasp of the ideas active in that day. Thus we are given a series of anecdotes, all authentic and all reliably rendered—but no life of Turgenev, which must inevitably be in part also a life of his times. And the biographer of a novelist must show some critical power. I feel it is wholly superficial to put forward as "one of the reasons" for Tolstoy's feeling of resentment against Turgenev that he may have "envied Turgenev's ability to write such fine prose". The quarrel went deeper than that: Tolstoy's prose is different from Turgenev's because their vision was so different. Tolstoy could only write as his genius compelled him. Crude and ungainly his prose may often be, but he sought to express a powerful vision in the most truthful—or should one say the least fallacious?—words he could find. He did not consider Turgenev's qualities, which were trivial in his view.

As a translator Mr. Magarshack is to be commended. Both these additions to the Penguin Classics maintain the high standards which the series has preserved in translation from other languages. It is most heartening to see the Russian classics put, one by one, into competent hands, and issued in sound, idiomatic versions. At least the reader can feel confident that nothing has been distorted, and that he can begin to judge the work on what is presented to him. Translating long novels like these is an arduous work, and one should not complain if the cadence and sometimes the feel of the original seem to have gone. If only the strictness of the Penguin translators could meet with the literary tact of a Constance Garnett, the "translator general" in whom they combined could have a lifetime of useful labour.

One small point, not entirely trivial: Miss Edmonds in her introduction states that, after reading a fragmentary tale by Pushkin, "that evening in his study Tol-

stoy wrote the first pages of *Anna Karenin*". This is misleading. She should make it clear that the existing first pages were not those with which Tolstoy began. After reading Pushkin's sentences he wrote an earlier draft of Book Two, Chapter Six (the evening party at Princess Betsy's). Here the resemblance is plain enough.

HENRY GIFFORD.

Diaghilev's Oversight: and the Aftermath.

John Gregory. With a foreword by Sir John Anderson. (The Federation of Russian Classical Ballet. 18 pp. 3/6.)

IN the stifling atmosphere of political prejudice, Mr. Gregory's interesting thesis comes as a breath of fresh air. He courageously points out that whereas English audiences have shown great enthusiasm at Soviet dancers' performances, the slighting jibes of some respected critics made one believe that "they were writing out of pique or politics-inspired hatred". In contrast with the critics' "petty verdicts and shoddy appreciation of the principles of the classical dance", Mr. Gregory is convinced that any dancer would give a great deal to be able to dance like the Russians, who have "transformed the classical dance from a spectacle of soulless posing into a state of sensuous wonderment". He emphasises the unfavourable economic conditions responsible for the sterility of ballet in western Europe, without comparing them to the state-financed ballet schools and theatres in imperial Russia and, on a vastly larger scale, in the USSR, where money is no concern in the development of talent, which is sought far and wide.

Mr. Gregory correctly relates Diaghilev's decadent phase to the severance of the active connection with Russia, and the theme is that Diaghilev also overlooked the necessity to establish a nursery in western Europe to perpetuate the great Russian school of ballet, which has given the movement its finest artists. It is with this omission that Mr. Gregory is mainly concerned, and in the preface Sir John Anderson aptly remarks that "the present state of ballet coincides with the spiritual decadence of our time".

After paying a tribute to "the unassailable supremacy of Soviet dancers", beside whom "western dancers appear but pale shadows", Mr. Gregory criticises Soviet ballets as retrograde, propaganda, meagre in repertoire, ridiculous to our sophisticated and blasé sense of perspective, lacking in novelties and in interesting subject matter. He proposes a lend-lease: sending choreographers with a sheaf of novelties to the USSR in exchange for dancers. It does not occur to him that Soviet "super-dancers" could not display their "Olympian grandeur", "god-like strength", "eloquent simplicity and naturalness" in choreographic cocktails flavoured with eroticism, or in dry, meaningless exercises à la manière de Blanchine. There must be

an exchange of artists without adulterating each other's national art. Why not send a Shakespeare company to Russia? Surely Soviet ballets on subjects by Pushkin, Shakespeare, Gogol and other great masters are not devoid of interest. Can we afford to reject not only choreographers like Lavrovsky and Zakharov, who in Ulanova's opinion are equal to Fokine, but also the music written for their ballets by great Soviet composers? Contrary to Mr. Gregory's view, Russian self-criticism, admitting certain failures, does not minimise the achievements of their choreographers. Mr. Gregory uses the hackneyed word "propaganda", ignoring that art must reflect its epoch. Any work of art that has a social message to convey (to propagate) may be called propaganda, as for example Pushkin's "Ode to Freedom", Gogol's "Inspector-General", or Glinka's "Ivan Susanin". Tolstoy, Dickens, Balzac and other masters served social interests. If social ideas are expressed in artistic form they are not propaganda but a vital work of art. Ballet subjects cannot be limited to fairies, Greek gods, or to women who crack diamonds or cohabit with a wolf. As to the "meagre" repertoire of the Bolshoi Theatre alone, it includes over twenty modern ballets and many old classics.

Mr. Gregory refers to Sebastian Haffner's "refreshing and discriminating" criticism, without quoting his statement: "Who are we to sneer who are ourselves wearing the last set of Russia's cast-off clothes, for, undoubtedly, the cultural Bolshevism of the twenties, with its half-sincerity, its storming against convention, its experiments and obscurities, has now become the artistic creed of the west." It is this sheaf of novelties that Mr. Gregory proposes to send back to Russia. In fact, Soviet choreographers have extended the range of classical movements far beyond the dream of western modernists. Their "lifts", "human torpedoes", horizontal *tours en l'air pas ciseaux en tournant*, etc.,

are breath-taking by their novelty and ethereal beauty. The secret of their art is that they are not blasé as we are, but full of enthusiasm and vitality. In spite of his half-truths Mr. Gregory is on the right path—but alas in a desert!

V.K.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Books

- ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF RUSSIA, The. G. H. Hamilton. (*Pelican History of Art*, 42/-.)
 GAME OF CHESS, The. H. Golombek (*Penguin Books*, 2/6.)
 GONCHAROV, D. Lavrin. (*Bowes and Bowes*, 6/-.)
 LIFE IN RUSSIA, Leslie C. Stevens (*Longman's*, 25/-.)
 MAGIC GLOVE, The. (*Maxson and Co.*, 3/6.)
 SCIENCE IN HISTORY. J. D. Bernal. (*C. A. Watts*, 42/-.)
 WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP, 1954, H. Golombek. (*MacGibbon and Kee*, 15/-.)

Periodicals

- HERALD OF PEACE, The. July-September and October-December 1954, new series Nos. 2 and 3. (*International Peace Society*, 4d. each.)
 POLITICAL AFFAIRS. September, October and November 1954 (*New Century Publishers*, 25c. each.)
 SOVIET STUDIES. VI, 2 and 3; October 1954 and January 1955. (*Basil Blackwell*, 9/6 each.)

Pamphlets

- EAST-WEST TRADE (V. Spandaryan) : EUROPEAN SECURITY (D. Melnikov) : MOSCOW CONFERENCE : MOSCOW SOVIET REPORT (M. Z. Saburov) : PROPERTY IN THE USSR (*Soviet News*, 1d. or 2d. each).

SCR PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES

Readers of THE ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL may wish to get in touch with the Secretary of the local SCR Committee so that they may be kept informed of local SCR activities. The following list is appended for their convenience.

BIRMINGHAM : Mr. Michael Robinson, 266 Kingsbury Road, Erdington, Birmingham 24.

BRADFORD : Mr. G. R. Ashton, B.A., 170 Swinnow Road, Pudsey, nr. Leeds.

BRISTOL : Mr. Scott Simpson, 7 Henleaze Park Drive, Bristol.

CAMBRIDGE : Miss S. Pascal, Girton College.

LEEDS : Mr. A. Dressler, Russian Department, The University, Leeds 2.

LIVERPOOL : Mr. E. Dawson, 20 Brompton Avenue, Sefton Park, Liverpool 17.

MANCHESTER : Mr. R. Barstow, 20 Cartwright Street, Audenshaw, Manchester.

NEWCASTLE : Mr. J. Bossanyi, 16 Alexandra Terrace, Whitley Bay.

NOTTINGHAM : Mr. J. Daniels, 16 Greendale Gardens, Astley Park Drive, Nottingham.

SOUTHAMPTON : Mr. A. L. Merson, 109 Ethelburt Avenue, Southampton.

YORK : Mr. W. Coleman, 80 Monkgate, York.

SWANSEA : Mrs. Farrington, 4 Bethany Lane, Westcross, Mumbles, Swansea.

SCR

PROGRAMME OF LONDON EVENTS

FEBRUARY—APRIL 1955

(All at 7.30 at 14 Kensington Square, with 1s. 6d. (1s.) admission charge, unless otherwise stated.)

February

- 1st : **Interesting End-Games.** *H. M. Lommer.* Chess Demonstration-Lecture.
10th : **Talks with Soviet Writers.** *Jack Lindsay.* Lecture.
15th : **Discipline and Moral Upbringing.** *Miss M. Cooke* (Headmistress) and *F. Bassett* (Education Lecturer). Forum.
17th : **British Historians Meet Soviet Colleagues.** *R. Browning, C. Hill, E. Hobsbawm* and *A. L. Morton.* Lecture Symposium.
23rd : **The Procurator-General's Office.** *D. N. Pritt, Q.C.* (Second in series of law lectures. SEE PAGE 7.)
27th : **Tenth Symphony.** *Shostakovich.* First performance in Britain. Tape-recording recital. 7.0 p.m.

March

- 3rd : **Backward Children in the USSR.** *John McLeish.* Lecture.
14th : **Biochemistry in USSR Today.** *Professor V. A. Engelhardt.* Lecture. Admission 2s. 6d. (2s.).
26th : **Special Members' Meeting :** 2.30-4.30. **Conference on Future Plans :** 5.0-7.0. Admission by SCR membership card.
27th : **Sadko.** *Rimsky-Korsakov.* Bolshoi Theatre choir, soloists and orchestra. Conductor : *N. Golovanov.* Tape-recording recital. 7.0 p.m.
29th : **Soviet Housing Law.** *W. Sedley.* (Third in series of law lectures. SEE PAGE 7.)
30th : **Teaching and Research Laboratories in USSR.** *Dr. Alex Comfort* and *Dr. M. Abercrombie.* Impressions.
31st : **Teachers' Film Show.** With introductory talk. Admission 2s. 6d. (2s.).

April

- 2nd : **Vecherinka.** Russian entertainment and food. Members' bar. Admission 2s. 6d.
3rd : **Children's Film Show.** For children aged six or over. No adults without children. At 3.0 p.m. Admission 2s. 6d. adults, 1s. children.
19th : **Soviet Legal Education.** *E. L. Johnson.* (Fourth in series of law lectures. SEE PAGE 7.)



Russian Classes

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